



Signed by Chair of Governors

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Early Years Policy

A. INTRODUCTION

The Foundation Stage

The period from age three to the end of the reception year is described as the foundation stage. It is a distinct stage of education and important both in its own right and in preparing children for later schooling.

At Trowse Primary School our aims are to:

- provide an environment that is safe and secure and which promotes a positive attitude to learning
- promote active learning through structured play and other tasks
- provide opportunities for children to become independent learners
- help children develop emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually
- help children feel successful with a strong sense of self-esteem
- lay the foundations of a good partnership with parents and carers

This policy is for the staff, governors, parents, children and community.

For members of staff the purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a sense of direction
- ensure a consistent approach
- enable all staff to operate within clear guidelines
- enable planned development to occur
- provide a basis for evaluation

Our aims in the Early Years Policy are underpinned and informed by Every Child Matters and the Teaching and Learning Policy.

B. THE CURRICULUM

The foundation stage is organised into six areas of learning:

- 1 Personal and Social Development
- 2 Communication, Language and Literacy
- 3 Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
- 4 Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- 5 Physical Development
- 6 Creative Development

These six areas provide the framework for planning. Each area of learning has a number of early learning goals, which establish the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage, and are a basis for future learning.

By the end of reception, some children will have exceeded the goals and others will still be working towards them.

1. Personal and Social Development

Successful development in this area of learning is critical for very young children in all aspects of their lives. It is also a pre-requisite for their success in all other areas of learning. It is crucial that our setting provides the experiences and support that enable children to develop a positive sense of themselves and establish good attitudes to learning. It is often promoted through the other five areas of learning. In addition, circle times to explore issues are implemented as soon as the children begin school. Philosophical thinking is also encouraged and sessions are planned to promote reflective thought.

2. Communication, Language and Literacy

This area of learning covers the development of communication skills. These include speaking and listening in different situations and for different purposes, exploring books, reading a range of simple texts and writing for a variety of purposes. The children are encouraged to use our role play area to help them explore and experience different settings and characters.

3. Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

This area of learning includes counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns and working with numbers, shapes, spaces and measures. Mathematical understanding is developed through practical situations, including stories, songs, games and imaginative play, so that children enjoy using and experimenting with numbers.

4. Knowledge and Understanding of the World

In this area of learning the children are developing the skills, knowledge and understanding that help them make sense of the world around them. They are encouraged to explore, observe and discuss elements of their environment, both indoors and out. They have the opportunity to solve problems and make decisions. This area forms the basis for future work in history, geography, science, design and technology and Information and Communication Technology.

5. Physical Development

This area of learning focuses on children's physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills, in indoor and outdoor environments. It includes establishing positive attitudes towards a healthy and active way of life.

6. Creative Development

This area of learning relates to the stimulation of curiosity and engagement with a wide range of sensory experiences. It focuses on the development of children's imagination and creativity and their ability to explore, express and share ideas and feelings through different forms of communication. The aspects covered in this area include art, music, dance, role-play and imaginative play.

C. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRICULUM

The Learning Environment

We strive to create a well-planned and organised environment that gives children rich and stimulating experiences. This provides the structure for teaching within which children feel safe to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions and choices for themselves, thereby enabling them to learn, develop and make good progress.

There are opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults, and also those that they plan or initiate themselves. Children's play is extended through sensitive and informed intervention and involvement by the adults.

The working area is well resourced with suitable equipment. It is divided into the following areas:

- carpeted area and book corner
- sand, water and exploratory play
- computer station
- tables for group activities
- access to the playground to enable outdoor activities
- a resource base for children to access independently

The Working Day (Reception and Year 1 Class)

The children and their parents are welcome in the school grounds from 8:45am onwards. The children are encouraged to play with their peers in the playground until 8:55 and staff are available for any brief communication with parents and carers.

At 8:55 the children come into school and organise their own belongings (bookbags, coat etc put in the correct places). They then begin their self-registration activities, planned by the teacher. These activities are based around several areas of learning and encourage the children to work independently, allowing them time to talk to their peers and settle into the school day.

At 9:30 the class assembles on the carpet for whole class teaching. This session is usually Maths based and the activities following the carpet session are carefully differentiated to meet the needs of all the children. The session ends with a plenary to re-enforce the learning.

After playtime, the whole class assembles for a session which is usually Literacy based. Again the activities that follow are devised to support the learning and are carefully differentiated. This session also ends with a plenary.

In the afternoon the activities are based on a cross curricular approach, and link to our topic for that term. Play opportunities are exploited and given a high profile, with a chance for the children to develop a range of skills across several areas of the curriculum.

There are planned opportunities for the children to integrate with children in other year groups, including assemblies and book buddies.

Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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 are involved with both group and individual play, some initiated by adults and some by children. Children are able to take risks and make mistakes, and learn from them.

Monitoring Progress

Children are assessed using the Bury Infant Check at the end of their first half-term in school. The adults in the classroom will monitor and make key notes about the children while they are working, both in directed and independent activities. Information is collected through observations of the children initiating their own learning, as well as noting if they have met specific learning objectives during adult led activities. Children's work is marked and annotated as an ongoing process, helping to form an overall picture of the children's understanding.

The teachers are continually updating the e-profile (foundation stage profile used nationally as a formative assessment tool) of each child in the class, transferring the classroom observations in to this record. This then informs future planning to ensure all children are being appropriately challenged and have the opportunity to reach their full potential within the foundation stage.

Parents are encouraged to attend parent's evenings with the teachers in the Autumn and Spring terms to discuss how their child is getting on in school, as well as how well their child is progressing. The accumulated assessments are then sent home to parents at the end of the year as a record of their progress throughout Reception, along with a written report from the teachers giving an overall view of the child's learning and attitude to school life so far.

The Role of the Adults

The class is led by a qualified teacher and a learning support assistant provides full time support. Teachers and classroom assistants keep up-to-date with current developments in education by attending relevant courses and conferences. Where this takes them out of the classroom in school time, a suitably qualified supply teacher is employed to cover their absence.

Children with Special Educational Needs

The school strives to meet the needs of every child in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy. For those with Special Educational Needs, Individual Education Plans are drawn up by the class teacher and shared with the parents. Extra support is provided, as appropriate, by learning support assistants and/or outside agencies.

D. THE INDUCTION PROCESS

The transition from pre-school to school is hugely important and can set the tone for future attitudes and achievements. The following list provides an overview of practical activities planned to ensure that entry in to school is positive and enjoyable:

- Liaison with previous settings, through records or in person depending on need.
- Parents Questionnaire – to help inform us of any personal circumstances that may affect the settling process.
- Open evening for parents – to allow parents to meet each other and for us to give parents information to help them and their child 'be ready' for school.
- Children's visits – children are invited to come in to school for three afternoons to help them feel confident in the classroom setting.
- Home School Book
- Half days for the first week to help the children become confident in school before attending for lunchtimes.

As of September 2011, all children are entitled to attend school full-time in the September of the academic year of their fifth birthday. Children must attend full time education at the beginning of the term of their fifth birthday.

E. LINKS WITH PARENTS

After 'induction', links with parents are maintained in the following ways:

- Regular newsletters informing parents of events taking place in school.
- A curriculum overview explaining broadly what the children will be learning about is sent to parents half-termly.
- We have a Class One noticeboard outlining key learning and notices for the week.
- Twice a year parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress in detail with the teacher at parent's evenings.
- A full written report is sent home annually.
- We have an open door policy at Trowse Primary School and talk regularly with parents. Parents are always welcome to chat with their child's teacher before or after school. They can make an appointment if they feel they need more time to discuss a particular concern. The teachers will do their best to accommodate them.

- Parent forums are held regularly, covering various issues regarding school life, including helping your child with reading and writing and what the governors role in school is.
- Parents can access the school website for newsletters and other relevant information.

F. LINKS WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY

We are in touch with other pre-school providers in the community and are able to discuss issues with them where necessary. When it is appropriate to the topic the class is following, we may invite to the school members of the community to talk to the children, e.g. fire brigade, nurses, residents. Opportunities for the children to learn about their local environment are planned in to topics where relevant.

We have contact with a range of support services:

- School health and health visiting
- Speech therapy
- Education welfare
- Social services
- School psychological services
- Out of school care/child care

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