

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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I. Aims

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At The Belham, 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 helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent 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.

The Senior Leadership Team will evidence these within the Early Years Self-evaluation Form.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

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

3.1 A Unique Child

At The Belham, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. 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; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion - We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. At the Foundation Stage we set individual, realistic and challenging expectations based on the current developmental stages of the children so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage.

We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that 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;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of all children including: 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, both genders and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.

- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

3.2 Positive Relationships

At The Belham we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. All staff in the Foundation Stage aim to interact positively through taking time to listen. Children are warmly welcomed along with their carers each morning and methods of communication between staff and parents are strong. Please see 6. Working with parents.

3.3 Enabling Environments

At The Belham we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with both planned continuous provision and child-initiated areas. Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2017 statutory framework of the EYFS.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics

- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Reception teachers plan activities within the classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are;

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

4.1 Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. There is a clear 'pupil voice' in each week's planning as the children are asked about what they know/would like to learn. Interests, knowledge and skills are not assumed and the basis of all planning starts with the children. This is evidenced in the weekly planning, displayed within the classroom.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

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.

4.3 Visits and Visitors

The part of visits and visitors plays a very important role in the Early Years at The Belham, as these are an opportunity to further develop our children's view of their world or community.

Each term the children are given the opportunity to widen their experience through either visits to the local area (including London) or have visitors invited into the school who are experts in their field. Each of these visits are carefully planned and tailored to the topics the children are actively learning.

As well as carefully planning the educational aspects of these experiences, we ensure that all ratios are matched for the year group carefully. We ensure that there is a ratio of 1:5. Further information can be found in our Educational Visits Policy.

5. Assessment

At The Belham, 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. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Examples of these could be through conversations that take place between staff and parents or through our online learning journal.

We use an online learning journal called Tapestry. This allows the parents to have ongoing access to their children's learning and parental input is strongly encouraged. Each observation is accompanied by assessment criteria which is used to identify next steps both individually and as a cohort. This informs future planning. A 'Gap Analysis' is conducted half termly.

At the end of the EYFS, 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
- Exceeding expected levels or,
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

6. Working with parents

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. Tapestry and the EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

The class teacher is the named key worker for each class in the setting. The role of each teacher is to ensure that each child's care and development is carefully catered for through play, project and other experiences.

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. We foster this through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our New Parents Evenings.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.

- Inviting parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time at Stay and Play sessions..
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Contact through Tapestry, publishing email addresses of school staff, the closed Facebook groups and school newsletters.
- Sending home 'Proud Clouds' or 'Magical Me' slips designed to enable parents to record outstanding achievements.
- Publishing a Creative Curriculum topic map detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the term or half-term as well as a class letter/termly overview.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Valuing the on-going contributions to Tapestry from parents/carers.
 - Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
 - Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in reception.
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.
 - Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding Policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by The Head of School every two years.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the local governing body for comment.

9. Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act.

The Board of Dulwich Hamlet Educational Trust is responsible for ensuring that all schools in the Trust meet the requirements of the Equality Act. DHET welcomes this responsibility and will :

- Ensure that everything the school does must be fair, non-discriminatory and not put individuals or groups of people at a disadvantage.
- Ensure the school takes all reasonable steps to see that its employees do not carry out unlawful discriminatory actions or behaviour
- Support and guide the school to have 'due regard' for equality in all its functions
- To ensure the success of every pupil, equal opportunity is at the heart of our vision with an insistence that all pupils will do well.

Appendix I. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according the EYFS statutory framework.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See Health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See Health and safety policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints policy