

Mrs Bland's Infant and Nursery School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Policy Date: September 2021

Policy Ratified: September 2023

Policy Review Date: September 2024



MRS BLAND'S INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY (EYFS)

Purpose and Background

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to five years of age. At Mrs Bland's we offer Early Years education and care for 2-5 year olds. This is structured in the following way:

- Little Acorns – Little Acorns offers places to our 2 year olds and rising 3 year olds.
- Acorns – Acorns is our readiness for school nursery. The children attend Acorns in the year before they move up to Reception.
- Reception – The children start Reception in the September of the academic year in which they become 5 years old. At the end of their Reception year, the children move on to Key Stage 1.

We offer extended hours for all of the children in the early years. This provides parents with the flexibility of their children attending from 7.30am-6.00pm.

We base our practice on the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 statutory framework. We strive to consistently provide a stimulating, engaging and exciting learning environment to match the needs of individual children while providing opportunities to apply and consolidate their skills whilst providing chances to encounter new challenges. Our curriculum has been designed with our children at the forefront of it. We have created progressive curriculum milestones for the children to work towards during their time at Mrs Bland's.

Aims

Meeting the needs of every child lies at the heart of everything we do at Mrs Bland's.

- We aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning.
- We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners.
- We value the individual child and work alongside parents/carers to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.
- We foster independence and positive attitudes to learning - each child is encouraged to reach his or her full potential regardless of their ethnic and socio-economic background, race, gender or ability.

The EYFS Statutory Framework 2021

We believe that early childhood is the foundation in which children build the rest of their lives and at Mrs Bland's we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

We are committed to underpinning our provision with the four themes of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

1. Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
3. Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** in which their experiences respond to their individual needs – there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
4. **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

How do we put these principles into practice?

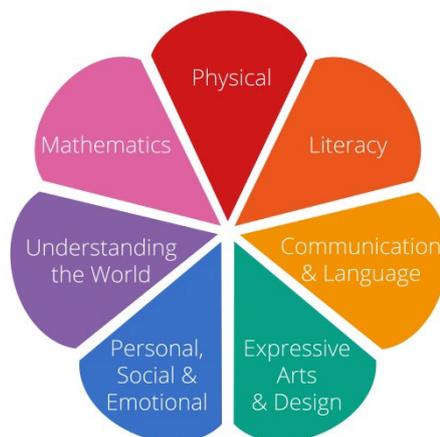
As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning using play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and apply anti-discriminatory practice – we provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and carers and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child initiated
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment indoors and outdoors

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable children to achieve and succeed.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.



The '**Prime**' areas

The prime areas of learning are particularly important in the first 3 years and practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas of learning are:

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

The '**Specific**' areas

The children will strengthen and apply their skills in the prime areas through the specific areas of learning. The four specific areas of learning and development are:

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

In planning and guiding children's activities practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The three **characteristics of effective teaching and learning** are:

1. **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
2. **Active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties
3. **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas; they make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first hand experiences, in which they can explore, think creatively and be active.

Teaching and learning in the early years is organised through a range of approaches and provides a balance of child initiated and adult-led activities:

- Planned focused activities where adults work with a small group of children at a time. Teachers will differentiate the activity to meet the needs of every child participating.
- Small group teaching of early reading and writing through our daily phonics programme.
- Whole class teaching for short periods of time such as shared story time, direct teaching (for example of maths), songs and rhymes, discussions and sharing work.
- Opportunities for teachers to work alongside children as they develop their own interests in particular areas of the curriculum.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS. It also underpins learning and all aspects of children's development. Through play, children develop language skills, their emotions and creativity, social and intellectual skills. For most children their play is natural and spontaneous although some children may need extra help from adults.

Play takes place indoors and outdoors and it is in these different environments that children explore and discover their immediate world. It is here they practise new ideas and skills; they take risks, show imagination and solve problems on their own or with others. The role that adults have is crucial. The adults observe and listen and engage through meaningful and high-quality interactions. They value play and provide safe but challenging environments that support and extend learning and development.

Observations and Assessment

The new Early Years curriculum has made it clear that the adults no longer need to create lengthy written reports about each child. Instead, they need to demonstrate their understanding of each child through conversations and interactions with each child. The main objective of this is that staff focus on the things that matter most – spending more time with the children to help them develop and progress through high quality interactions.

At Mrs Bland's the adults will capture the 'magic moments' which capture achievements and progress. In addition to this, the adults will write a narrative observation for each child every half term to provide longer, more detailed observations of the children as they learn and play. Within these observations staff are able to make links to the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning, reflect on next steps for the children and record any additional notes about things to follow up, such as skills that the children could practise or activities or topics of interest.

The purpose of observations and assessments are:

- To find out about individual children, their development, needs and interests
- To inform plans to support individual children, their learning and development, needs and interests
- To monitor children's development in all areas of learning
- Share information with parents/other professionals
- To evaluate effectiveness of our provision
- To meet the requirements of the Statutory framework for the EYFS

Observations of the children's achievements are collated in their own personal Learning Journeys which are shared with parents/carers. The child's progress is reviewed every half term and is regularly discussed with parents/carers. Children are actively encouraged to contribute to their Learning Journeys and to help plan for their own 'next steps in learning'. Throughout their time at Mrs Bland's school parents/carers are welcomed in to share in their children's learning, both informally through our 'open door' policy and formally during parent/teacher consultations.

Teachers in Reception carry out the NFER statutory Reception Baseline Assessment. This has to be completed within the first 6 weeks of a child starting Reception. It is a short assessment to assess the child in early maths, literacy and communication, and language and provides a snapshot of where pupils are when they arrive at school. At the end of Reception, the teachers use the EYFS Early Learning Goals to make a best-fit judgement about a child's development, and their readiness for Year 1. Within their child's final term of Reception, we provide parents/carers with a report based on their child's progress in Reception and against the EYFS Early Learning Goals.

Safety including Safeguarding and Welfare

"Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well"
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage page 21)

Children's safety and welfare at Mrs Bland's is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment within our school and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure the safety of our whole school community.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways –

- ✓ We talk to the children about healthy eating and the promote the importance of good oral health
- ✓ Every morning the children are provided with a nutritious fruit snack
- ✓ We allocate significant time for physical development
- ✓ We follow set procedures when children become ill

The role of parents/carers

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's care and education in numerous ways.

The role of outside agencies

Working with outside agencies is integral to our practice in order to meet the individual needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible for a child.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings. When relevant we invite members of the community into our setting to talk about their lives, work and experiences.

Transition

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings.

Before children start in our Reception class –

- Our transition begins with the Early Years Leader visiting all nursery/pre-school settings. These visits provide an opportunity for the Early Years Leader to meet the children and talk to the key worker. Notes are recorded from these visits and are then shared with the class teachers.
- In the second half of the summer term, new starters and their parents are invited into school for 1:1 meetings with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. At these meetings key questions are asked and time is given to parents if they have any questions of their own or any concerns they would like to flag;
- We then provide parents with an information pack, aimed to provide answers to some of the questions parents may have; it also contains ideas to make transition to school easier for the child

We have well planned transition programme where children will attend shorter hours at the start of the term to ensure all children settle into school happily and confidently. The transition programme will be tailored to the needs of the children so can be extended for those for whom it would be of benefit. This will be a joint decision made by the school staff and the parents of the child.

At the end of the EYFS our Reception staff meet with Year 1 teachers to liaise and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. Children will have the opportunity to meet with their new teacher to get to know them through our Move-up Days.'

Management of policy

Governors' Committee Responsible:

Pupil Progress Committee Meeting

Policy Originator:

Sarah Williams (Deputy Head/Early Years Leader)

Next review date:

September 2022