



Bracken Hill School

EYFS Policy

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Policy Type: Whole School

This policy is reviewed biennially to ensure compliance with current regulations

The Governors of the school recognise that all staff play a vital role in the achievement of high standards and in providing our pupils with the best opportunities matched to their needs.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#) for 2025.

Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) aims to develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding across the seven areas of learning and development. There is a real focus on developing the children's communication along with promoting attention to both child-led and adult led experiences, encouraging emotional and social skills. Learning will be through practical and play activities, which are exciting, structured and relevant to the child. Wherever possible experiences will be related to the real world to prepare the children for their future learning as they move through school.

Implementation

In EYFS at Bracken Hill School we aim to provide a play based broad and balanced curriculum which addresses the children's social, emotional, physical, intellectual, moral and cultural development within a safe, secure, stimulating environment.

Opportunities are provided so that the children can explore and develop in all seven areas of Learning and Development. The prime areas are:

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

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

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

These areas of learning and development and the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) within them are used to encourage the development of the whole child.

Physical Space

The classroom is set up so the children are able to engage in all seven areas, both through independent play and with adult support and encouragement. A focus room is used to develop specific skills across all areas but specifically literacy, communication and maths skills. We have frequent short whole class carpet sessions that are used every day to develop communication along with attention, turn taking skills. With the use of songs, signs and symbols we aim to widen the children's experiences of the outside world.

Outside learning is provided continuously throughout the day where large pieces of physical equipment, small world play, construction tools along with English and maths resources are used to further encourage learning in all seven areas.

Curriculum

All EYFS students follow the Explorer Pathway of our school learning strands (Explorers, Adventurers and Pioneers) and use a different theme each half term as a vehicle for our learning.

The class team work closely with professionals including Speech and Language therapists and Sensory Occupational therapists to ensure the development of student's communication and engagement skills.

At Bracken Hill School we use the characteristics of effective teaching and learning to develop the children's independence skills and motivation to learn. We plan activities, observe and assess the children 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

Play

Play holds a vital role in the EYFS and in the daily lives of children. By considering the children's previous experiences, current interests and developmental needs, we can make the most of a wide range of learning possibilities which arise spontaneously through play. Whether children play alone or with other children, and whether play is free or structured, its purpose in the Early Years classroom is not merely to keep children occupied, but rather to contribute in a vital way to their educational development.

We ensure that children have uninterrupted time in which to explore their environment independently, setting their own challenges and making their own discoveries. They need opportunities to work on specific self-chosen activities and time with adults who are able to promote and develop their natural interests. Children learn best when they are interacting with their environment – which includes people, as well as materials and information and by discovering how and why things happen for themselves. Opportunities for children to develop ideas, grasp concepts and cultivate skills often arise when least expected however much thought has gone into curriculum planning. For us the educators, the art is knowing where and when to intervene (and when not to), how best to validate and nurture the child's natural curiosity, when to focus on a specific task, and when to give the child time and space to play and explore independently.

Assessment

At Bracken Hill School ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe children to identify their level of achievement and interests. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers as well as the information detailed in their EHCP.

When new children who are reception age enter the school, they will be formally assessed using the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), but only if this is considered appropriate depending on the individual's additional needs. Further assessment is ongoing carried out through a mixture of formal and informal observation, interaction with the child and regular discussions with all staff.

As a team we observe, record, model and extend learning through thoughtful interaction and observation. To ensure a consistent approach the Early Years Team meet weekly to discuss planning, observations and next steps for the children. All children have an IEP where termly targets are set and reviewed. We observe the children working independently both indoors and outdoors. Records of such observations are made using photographs and comments in the children's learning journals. Children are assessed during both self-led and adult focused activities against the objective for that activity. Samples and photographs of the children's work are kept in their books as appropriate. Maths and English books are also used with those children in F2 and above.

Assessment is continuous; however, we record attainment formally in our baseline assessment on entry which we aim to complete within three weeks of them starting. Student progress is recorded on the Solar assessment tool which is used to evidence progress in English Maths and the Autism Education Trust framework.

Home School Communication

We frequently update parents on their child's progress. This may be in the form of phone calls or messages on our home school communication app Seesaw. It can be used to share photographs and encourage parents to contribute to their child's learning journey.

Safeguarding and Welfare

We adhere to school policy on safeguarding, child protection and medication. We carry out regular risk assessments to ensure the health and safety of the children. We maintain a high staff to pupil ratio and a rolling program of first aid and CRB training for all staff. Where appropriate the children have regularly reviewed behaviour and personal care plans. We are supported by external agencies and specialists including our school nurse, occupational health, social care, SALT, and music and movement therapists who all contribute to the children's EHC plans. Parents are also directly involved with the creation and review of EHC plans.

Admissions and Transition

Children can join Bracken Hill School the term after their third birthday. Once a place has been given we will begin a process of transition which will be discussed with parents/carers in order to ensure this process is appropriate to the child. This process will usually include a visit to the child's current EYFS setting or home. Then visits to our EYFS class can be arranged initially with parents/carers then without. Photographs of our EYFS classroom and our team are also shared in the form of a book which the child can keep and look at home. Discussions with the parent/carers will also outline our school's expectations and arrangements, we will answer any questions and establish positive relationships.

On leaving our EYFS class children experience a three-week transition period at the end of the summer term. This enables the child to meet their new teacher, become more familiar with their new classroom and meet new friends.

Impact

At Bracken Hill School all children make good progress in all seven areas of learning and development. Evidence recorded in Learning Journals shows an increase in attention to self-chosen and adult led activities. Topic play-based learning and songs ensure the children are able to see links in their learning and therefore are motivated to engage in all areas of the curriculum. Seesaw ensures very good relationships between home and school, which allows the parents to feel really involved in their children's learning.

This policy will be review biennially – January 2028.