



*Providing the keys to success for every child*

## **Whole School Policy on:**

# **Early Years Foundation Stage**

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**Kent County Council**

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## **1. Introduction**

*"Every child deserves the best start in life and support to fulfill their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know that provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance." Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfES, 2007.*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday. At Palm Bay Primary School we recognise the legal requirements relating to learning and development (the educational programmes) and the welfare requirements laid out in the EYFS Statutory Framework and all practitioners ensure that the provision within the school complies with these.

This policy has been written with the central aim of ensuring that the EYFS provides all children with not only the best possible start to their education at Palm Bay Primary School, but enabling them to become confident, life-long learners equipped with the necessary social, academic and personal skills needed to succeed in the wider world.

Central to this policy are the four guiding principles of the EYFS:

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

## **2. Starting School – Easing the Transition**

We recognise the importance of the child's first term in school and we have a carefully managed transition process which is designed to be gradual and flexible.

In the Summer Term, we make contact with all the families of the children who will be beginning in the following academic year. All families are invited to a new intake parent information evening and 'marketplace' (an opportunity to meet with school uniform providers, school meal providers, school nursing and children's centres amongst others). Children are invited into school for transition events within the Summer Term, along with a Welcome Day at the start of the school year.

Staff endeavour to gather as much information about the children's pre-school learning experiences as possible and this is achieved through sending information requests to parents, meeting with pre-school settings at the local transition meeting and contacting pre-school settings on a one-to-one basis. Additionally all pre-schools should provide staff with a report document about each child's learning, based on the KCC 'My Unique Story' and 'My Unique Transition' documentation.



In the first week of the new academic year, staff conduct home visits with families to informally meet with the children and parents, ease any anxieties and help families to begin completing the 'My Learning Journey' document.

When children begin school, they do so on a part-time basis, gradually building up to full time attendance in the week before October half term. This enables staff to build up an accurate picture of the children's learning on entry and to form and establish positive and enabling relationships with the children through a high staff to pupil ratio. This part time timetable is fully flexible and can be adapted to meet the needs of the children and their families.

### 3. Principles of Teaching and Learning in the EYFS

#### *A Unique Child*

At Palm Bay Primary School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Central to the work in the EYFS, is the recognition that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. The curriculum is organised in such a way that practitioners are able to ensure that all children are valued as individuals with opportunities for each child to engage in personalised learning at all levels and in all areas of the curriculum

We ensure that the EYFS is an inclusive environment, which meets the needs of all the children within our care 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 to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

We recognise that in order for children to learn, they need to feel safe and secure. We endeavour to achieve this by complying with the welfare requirements of the statutory EYFS Framework, and we understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.



- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies, procedures and risk assessments required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

## **Positive Relationships**

Children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

At Palm Bay Primary School, we recognise the significant role that the family has to play in a child's education and as such we strive to develop a strong partnership with parents, even before the children begin school. We acknowledge the fact that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution that they make through:

- Inviting parents/carers and families to an induction meeting in the term before their child starts school.
- Inviting children to spend time in school during transition afternoons in the term before their child begins school (during which time parents/carers are invited to a coffee afternoon with the FLO).
- Visiting the children in their pre-school setting in the term before they begin school
- Conducting home visits or in-school meetings to meet with the parents/carers and children prior to starting school
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents/carers each term at which the teacher and the parent/carer discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents/Carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers: Creative Workshops, Class assemblies, Sports Day etc.
- Maintaining an ongoing dialogue with parents and carers about their child's education and providing them with opportunities to learn how to support their children at home through the provision of parent workshops during the children's first term in school.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistant.

## **Enabling Environments**

At Palm Bay Primary School we recognise the key role that the environment has in supporting and extending children's development and learning. This begins by observing



the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning in an enabling environment.

Planning within the EYFS distinguishes between the Early Learning Goals that can be achieved through the environment and those which require direct teaching. Long Term Planning defines these. Medium Term Planning is based around termly themes and these are used by the EYFS Practitioners as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

At Palm Bay Primary School we understand the importance of creating a rich and stimulating environment which enables the children to explore and learn securely and safely. Within the environments there are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classrooms have their own enclosed outdoor area, with opportunities for exploring wildlife areas and a garden area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

## **Learning and Development**

Children learn in different ways and at different rates with all areas of learning being interconnected and having equal importance.

The policy on Teaching and Learning defines the features of effective teaching and these apply as much to the EYFS as they do to any other stage of learning. Furthermore to these features it is important that we recognise the importance of the following with regards to children's learning and development in the EYFS:

- "Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."
- Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
- "Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."
- Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop



their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

- “When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Staff also carefully consider the children's development in terms of the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' as defined in the Early Years Framework 2012. They seek to ensure that all children have opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding through playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

## 4. The Curriculum

At Palm Bay Primary School the EYFS Curriculum is regarded as being fundamentally child-centred, focussing upon the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development of each individual child within our care. We recognise the diverse pre-school experiences of the children entering school and we cater for these through appropriate levels of differentiation, which continues as the children progress through their first year in school.

**The EYFS Curriculum is made up of seven areas of learning:**

Prime Areas of Learning			
Personal, Social and Emotional Development  <i>Making relationships</i> <i>Self-confidence and self-awareness</i> <i>Managing feelings and behaviour</i>	Physical Development  <i>Moving and handling</i> <i>Health and self-care</i>	Communication and Language  <i>Listening and attention</i> <i>Understanding</i> <i>Speaking</i>	
Specific Areas of Learning			
Literacy  <i>Reading</i> <i>Writing</i>	Mathematics  <i>Numbers</i> <i>Shape, space and measure</i>	Understanding the World  <i>People and communities</i> <i>The world</i> <i>Technology</i>	Expressive Arts and Design  <i>Exploring and using media and materials</i> <i>Being imaginative</i>

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally





important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. All the areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Practitioners plan for the six areas of learning using the *Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage* and by applying the principles outlined above.

## 5. Assessment and Reporting

All assessment, record-keeping and reporting is in accordance with the Whole School Policy on Assessment, Recording and Reporting.

Baseline assessments of the children upon entry are achieved through discussions and sharing of assessments with the feeder pre-school settings at a transition meeting held in the term before the children begin school, observations of the children in pre-school settings and observations undertaken during the children's first term in school. In-school moderation and collaborative moderation with other schools ensures that these judgements are accurate, and practitioners attend annual moderation meetings to ensure judgements are accurate.

Practitioners make regular assessments of the children, primarily through observation in accordance with the EYFS Guidance.

The expectation within the statutory framework is that judgements will be made about the children's learning against the Early Learning Goals at the end of the academic year. These judgements will be recorded and reported to parents and the local authority. During the year, staff will make judgements about each child's progress against the guidance documentation 'Development Matters' to inform planning and ensure that children are making good progress.

Staff will report to parents/carers three times a year through face to face meetings and the completion of 'My Learning Journey' a record of each child's unique learning journey in each area of the EYFS curriculum.

## 6. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of all EYFS practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher and Subject Co-ordinator will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

The EYFS Co-ordinator is responsible for the review and revision of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually during Term 1.

The next review of this policy is due: Autumn Term 1, 2015.