



## Early Years Foundation Stage at Blaby Stokes



The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Blaby Stokes, all children join us part time in September of the academic year in which they will become 5. After a short settling in period, they begin full time.

We believe that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, 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 and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We meet the needs of all our children 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 where necessary

At Blaby Stokes, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

*Parents as Partners:* Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- providing an opportunity for children to spend 3 sessions in our Foundation Stage during the half term prior to starting school

- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns
- having an open door policy – doors open 20 minutes early every day for parents to share concerns
- organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers: open afternoons, Sports Day, etc
- inviting parents to attend informal meetings providing information about other areas of the curriculum, eg Early Reading, Maths and Phonics

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 teachers act as the 'key person' for all the children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistants. Where children attend other settings in a day, we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children.

Our learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. The Foundation Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The unit is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Foundation Unit has two enclosed outdoor learning areas. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

### **Learning & Development**

There are seven areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage of which three are **prime areas**, and four **specific areas**. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

#### **Prime Areas**

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

### ***Specific Areas***

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive arts and design

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

- Planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers 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. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the EYFS Profile. Everyone in the Foundation Stage team contributes to assessment. Discussions take place on a weekly basis through our PLOD meetings (Possible Lines of Development) in order to discuss individual or groups of children and how to push their learning forward.
- Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which is shared with parents throughout the academic year. Key assessment information (phonics and maths assessments) are also used to inform parents of their child's progress.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

In addition, EYFS emphasises 3 Characteristics of Effective Learning, which underpin "learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner." These characteristics are the ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment, playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically:

#### ***Playing and exploring***

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

### ***Active Learning***

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 satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

### ***Creativity and Critical Thinking***

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and can 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.

### ***Health & Safety***

At Blaby Stokes there are clear procedures for assessing risk which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2014, at Blaby Stokes we undertake;

- fresh drinking water is available at all times
- children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required
- children's toileting needs will be met and acted upon per individual child (see separate policy)
- milk, fruit and fruit are available during the morning session
- a first aider is accessible at all times
- parents are informed (by telephone, person or letter) if they have received any first aid treatment at school that day