



EARLY YEARS POLICY

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| Date | November 2022 |
| Reviewed by | Lindsay Bowen & Alice Stow |
| Date | January 2024 |
| Ratified by Governors | January 2024 |
| Next review date | January 2025 |

“Our vision is to create a community where everyone achieves and thrives so that all our students succeed through their education years and beyond. Everyone is valued within a safe and nurturing environment. All our students have full and equal access to an ambitious curriculum, rich learning experiences and high-quality personalised support.” All our policies, processes and practices are reflective of this vision.



Key Issues

- The Revised Early Years Foundation Stage was introduced nationally in September 2012. It sets standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to 5 years.
- The new Statutory framework for the EYFS was rolled out nationally in September 2021. The new development matters non-statutory curriculum guidance was introduced alongside this. Birth to 5 matters non-statutory guidance has also been produced by the sector for the sector to support practitioners to facilitate the statutory framework.
- Each student has a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). These are targets/ outcomes set as part of their annual EHCP review in discussion with families, teachers and other agencies including SALT, OT and social care where appropriate. These outcomes are reviewed at regular intervals throughout the year.
- The statutory EYFS profile does not reflect the smaller steps of progression that Linwood, and Springwood students make. Teachers monitor progress against developmental stages within birth to 5 matters. Professionals use their knowledge, skills and evidence gathered of each child to make a best fit decision. Teachers meet with phase leaders termly to discuss progress and factors which impact progress and discuss strategies and interventions to support further progress.
- Since September 2023 teachers have had access to the Differentiated early years outcomes (Bristol City Council, 2021) which align with the Birth to 5 matter statements and has also drawn upon statements from the Autism Education Trust Progression Framework. This supports teachers to identify the smaller learning and development steps for children with SEND in Early Years.
- Since September 2021 all students entering reception take part in a statutory reception baseline assessment (RBA) framework. The purpose for this is to use an on-entry assessment of student attainment as a starting point in order to measure progress up to the end of key stage 2.
- New students to the EYFS phase have a 'baseline' recording against birth to 5 matters ranges in at the end of the autumn term. Assessments for the remaining EYFS phase are updated at the end of the first term, mid-year and again at the end of summer term.
- The EYFS profile is maintained for all Reception students and where appropriate Year 1 and Year 2 students. Each child's level of development is assessed against 17 early learning goals (ELGs) across all 7 areas of learning in the EYFS. Data is submitted to the L.A. in the



Summer Term for students who have reached the end of this curriculum pathway.

- Each student has an online Learning Journal through Evidence for Learning which has observations of the children linked to Birth to 5 matters and PLP targets alongside the Characteristics of Effective Learning. This learning journal continues on to the next stage of their curriculum pathway.
- Statements illustrating the students learning and achievement in all 7 areas of the curriculum, including the Characteristics of Learning are presented to parents at the end of the year as an annual report.
- At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings. PFA training must be renewed every three years and be relevant for people caring for young children.
- All staff involved in preparing and handling food must receive training in food hygiene.

Introduction

The National Early Years Foundation Stage provides practice guidance for those working with children from birth to 5 years. It follows 4 themes:

- A unique child.
- Positive relationships.
- Enabling environment.
- Learning and development.

These themes interlink but provide a comprehensive framework in which children can make progress in all areas of their development.

Aims

A unique child

Students will:

- Be given the opportunities to attain in all areas of their development: Physical, Cognitive, Linguistic, Spiritual, Social and Emotional.
- Feel valued as an individual.
- Have access to a happy and safe environment where they can become independent and confident learners.
- Have access to a setting that promotes their health and well-being

Positive Relationships

Students will:

- Be supported by good professional relationships amongst the adults who work with them and their families.
- Be supported by staff working in close partnership with parents.



- Be supported by good relationships built with the adults who work with them.
- Be supported to develop relationships with their peers, where they can play together.

Enabling Environments

Students will:

- Access planning informed by their current interests, development and learning.
- Access a learning journey based on their individual needs.
- Have access independently to resources which support and motivate their learning.
- Have access to an indoor and outdoor environment that provides a safe, secure yet challenging space for them to learn.
- Be supported by staff and other professionals working in close liaison.

Learning and Development

Students will:

- Learn through planned and structured play.
- Be challenged physically and mentally.
- Have opportunities through play to enable them to make connections thereby developing a greater understanding of the world around them.
- To develop in the 3 prime areas of Development Matters and extending to the 4 specific areas as the individual 'students' development allows.

Seven key features of Early Years effective practice

Practitioners should follow the key features of effective practice:

1. The best for every child

- All children deserve an equal chance of success
- High- quality early education is important for all children
- Children from disadvantaged backgrounds can often be behind their peers. We need to narrow the gap.
- High quality education and care is inclusive. SEND needs are identified quickly and support is put in place promptly to help them progress.

2. High-quality care

- The child's experience must be central to the thinking of every practitioner.
- Children thrive when they are loved and well cared for.
- High quality care is consistent.



- Practitioners will be responsive, they will support children to be independent and support them through transitions in their early years.

3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn

- The curriculum reflects what the setting wants children to learn.
- The curriculum should be ambitious.
- Plans should be flexible and driven by children's interests.
- Planning to help every child develop language is vital.
- Careful sequencing will help children build learning over time.

4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn

- Every child can make progress in their learning with the right help.
- Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches including play, adult and peer modelling, guided learning and direct teaching.
- Practitioners develop enabling environments and a well-planned indoor and outdoor learning environment for high quality play.

5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt

- Assessment is about knowing the child and what they can do and know, not about lots of data and evidence.
- Effective practitioners understand child development and are clear on what they want children to know and do.
- Assessments should not take practitioners away from the child for long periods of time.

6. Self-regulation and executive function

- Executive function includes: holding information in mind, focussing their attention, regulating their behaviour and planning what to do next.
- Executive function contributes to a child's ability to self-regulate: focus their thinking, monitor what they do and adapt, regulate strong feelings, be patient and bounce back.

7. Partnership with parents

- It is important to have a strong and respectful partnership with parents.
- Share clear information about their child's progress and listen to parents.
- Encourage parents to chat, play and read with their children and acknowledge the impact parents learning at home with their child will have.



Teaching and Learning

Initially, information given by parents, followed by our own observations, will enable us to plan and provide a learning environment which stimulates and motivates each individual to learn at their own pace. Baseline assessments are made at the end of their first full term with us inline with the rest of the school.

Every child has a Personalised Learning plan with targets set as part of their annual EHCP review in discussion with families, teachers and other agencies including SALT, OT, Physio and social care where appropriate. These outcomes are reviewed at regular intervals throughout the year.

Linwood embeds a 'total communication' approach. This includes using objects of reference, PEIC-D, PECS, Signalong, and use of photos and symbols. The SALT team work closely with the class teacher to provide assessment and individual targets for each student.

Through our regulation and engagement policy we have a positive approach towards behaviour. Identified children at Linwood campus and all students at Springwood have Personalised regulation and engagement plans (PREPs) with proactive strategies of support for the student. Zones of regulation approach is used in each class to support students to regulate their feelings, energy and sensory needs in order to meet the demands of the situation they are in.

Personal care plans are in place to clearly identify the support a student needs with toileting and eating and drinking (if appropriate) to develop their independence.

Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy support is available for the students who have needs in these areas. They may work with the student or provide initial assessment followed by targets and activities for work in class. There will be a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Teachers use a range of teaching and learning strategies. This includes both 1 to 1 work and group/class times.

Teachers plan for and direct the Teaching Assistants to support students effectively. Activities and planning reflect the 7 areas of learning development in the EYFS curriculum:

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world



- Expressive Arts and Design

Planning

The Early Years follow the Observation, assessment, planning cycle.

Linwood Campus

Morning sessions are open ended play sessions where children are observed interacting and exploring the learning environment. Staff assess skills the children have demonstrated and achievements made or provide support for children to progress and practice possible next steps.

Linwood Early Years team use approaches from planning in the moment and Hygge to provide awe inspiring and challenging learning provocations to motivate and challenge students. Staff follow the children interests and the seasons when creating adult directed sessions such as attention autism, singing, stories and moving onto numeracy and literacy sessions. This planning is documented through Evidence for learning observations.

Littlewood and Springwood Campuses

Within Springwood classes we have a mixture of open-ended child-initiated play sessions and structured adult led group times and activities to meet the needs of our individual classes following an Autism specific approach. Staff assess skills the children have demonstrated and achievements made or provide support for children to progress and practice possible next steps in both child-initiated and adult led learning.

Long term plans: In Early Years the long-term plans are across a 2 year cycle.

Medium term planning in Early Years features a topic web or activity overview of the 7 learning areas.

Short term planning identifies the possible learning outcomes for focused activities throughout the session, resources and classroom organisation.

Assessment, Recording, Reporting

Formative assessment is an integral part of teaching young children.

Children's development and learning is best supported from starting with the child, and matching interactions and experiences to meet the child's needs. Our observation, assessment and planning cycle describe what is frequently called assessment for learning.

Ongoing formative assessment is at the heart of our practice, it involves observation of children as part of all activities, which is often held in the mind of the practitioner and sometimes documented, using this rich information to understand how a child is developing, learning and growing, and then planning the next steps for the adults in supporting and extending this learning.



At the end of each term practitioners will make a best fit judgement within the ranges of Birth to 5 matters. These will be discussed at termly progress review meetings where factors impacting progress will be identified and interventions or strategies to support progress will be discussed and implemented.

Sharing progress with parents

Teachers have regular contact with parents via home-school communication books, email and face to face at pick up and drop offs. During the Autumn and Spring term there are parent consultation meetings to discuss how children have settled into school and discuss any concerns or issues. PLPs are reviewed termly and updated to reflect the progress made this is shared with parents during parent consultations. EHCP reviews are held annually and six monthly for all under 5's, additional to this.

Reports covering the seven areas of learning and characteristics of effective learning will be sent home and shared with parents at the end of the year. Judgements from the EYFS profile are submitted to the L.A. when the student has finished the EYFS pathway.

Admissions

Children are referred to Linwood School through a multi-disciplinary, statutory assessment as part of the EHCP process. Before coming into school, they may have been attending other organisations such as the Child Development Centre at Poole Hospital, a local Playgroup/Preschool (with 1 to 1 support). Pupils may also have been supported by Portage.

Students aged between 3 and 5 will join one of the EYFS classes based on their individual needs. They will have opportunities for inclusion with students from the other classes as well as with the whole school as appropriate. Some students may have a dual placement comprising of Linwood School and mainstream Playgroup/Preschool/Reception Class.

Multi Agency Links

Close links are continually developed with a range of external agencies. These include:

- Speech and Language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy
- Paediatrician, school nurse, community nurse and dieticians.
- Educational psychologists, clinical psychologists, IDCAMHS
- Social services.
- Portage.
- Teachers for the Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired.
- Parent partnerships e.g. Parent Link
- LA Early Years Team.
- Children's Information Services.



- BCP Children's Centre

Where portage has been received or pre-school attended, the teacher will use their information on the child's progress and development. In the case of dual placements, the teacher will promote a commitment to communication between the settings, so learning strategies can be shared. Linwood will take the lead as specialist placement and provide advice and training where appropriate.

Inclusion

Within school children benefit from inclusion with other classes in the primary phase. Opportunities are also organised for inclusion with local primary schools or other age appropriate activities in the community e.g. Singing and Story time Bournemouth Libraries, and across campus visits between Linwood, and Springwood sites.

Partnership with Parents

We strive to provide a welcoming atmosphere where all parents feel respected and know that their children are valued as individuals. We believe that approachable staff, help to create effective communication.

New pupil induction

A phased and gradual induction to school helps parents to feel happy leaving their children. It helps staff to get to know the children and gain information from parents. It helps provide security for the children to adjust to the setting and begin to develop relationships with staff. Before the children start at Linwood school they are provided with a Welcome Pack. Before a child is admitted to the setting, we must obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements.

Visits to pre-school/ school settings

As part of the transition process to Linwood school, the Early Years Learning leader will arrange a visit to observe the child in their current setting. This gives the Early Years Learning leader an opportunity to discuss the child with the staff to gain a better understanding of the child.

Home Visits

The teacher and an appropriate member of school staff completes a home visit to give parents and teachers a chance to discuss issues or concerns related to individual children. It also gives opportunities to see the children in a setting more familiar to them. It can be reassuring for children to see parents and teachers working together.

Parent School Links

If possible, parents are encouraged to have daily contact with school when bringing and/or picking up their child or by email. Communication between parents and teachers are also fostered in a number of ways:



- Telephone access/informal visits by arrangement
- Home/school diaries
- Opportunities to attend 'signalong' classes or parent workshops
- Stay and Play sessions
- Linwood School parent coffee mornings
- Parent consultation meetings
- Annual reviews

Resources

Teachers plan and resource a challenging environment where children's play can be supported and extended, language and communication can be developed and self-help skills and independent skills such as washing, toileting and eating can be practiced.

A classroom environment will reflect the cohort. It will be presented in a way that promotes individual student's progress and independence.

The learning environment includes focus on both indoor and outdoor play.

Planning reflects this and also the use of the local community.

Children have access to a range of technological equipment including 'touch screen' computer, iPads, sensory room and interactive whiteboard, eye gaze, and switches. Where needed, mobility equipment and specialised seating is available. The learning environment includes access to equipment that promotes gross motor skills, such as slides, climbing frames, ball pools and PE equipment.

Policy review

The Early Years Learning Leader at Linwood School is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy in consultation with other Early Years teachers. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if deemed necessary.