

EARLY YEARS POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

Our school is at the centre of our local community and provides a safe and nurturing environment where everyone develops a sense of self-worth and achievement. We believe that every person matters!

Introduction

- At Brookvale 'Early Years' refers to the children we have in our Reception class who came to us from a wide variety of settings including State Nurseries, Private Nurseries, Playgroups and occasionally with no experience of education outside the home.
- We are a one-form entry school with the reception class having its own mini unit of one classroom, entrance, toilet block and an outside learning environment. We join with the rest of the school for lunch, playtimes and assemblies, and we have use of the school hall for PD.
- Staffing consists of two part time Teachers, 1 full time teaching assistant and 1 TA sports coach (Part time). We are also a 'training' school and offer placements for students from local colleges following various 'childcare' related courses.

Admission

- Children are admitted into reception in the school year that they are 5 according to LEA guidelines. We stagger the intake over a 6 day period during early September, starting with the youngest children first, as they often have had less nursery experience and often take longer to settle, benefiting from being in a small group in their new environment for a while.
- Children attend part time for 1 week, allowing staff to spend concentrated and quality time with them, including all playtimes and lunch times, addressing the 'fears' that many young children express when leaving the security of their Nursery environment.

Aims for the Foundation Stage

- At Brookvale we believe that childhood is a time of play, and through play we discover the excitement of learning, the rewards of achievement and acquire our skills for life. In a bright, colourful, busy but well planned environment we encourage the children in the development of skills, attitudes and understanding that will help them to live full satisfying lives and become confident, useful, active members of a diverse, constantly changing society.

- It is through this process that children will work towards, achieve and in some cases exceed the Early Learning Goals.

Play in the Foundation Stage

- At Brookvale we believe that young children learn best through well planned play based activities.
- We value play and see it as an important stage in children's development.
- We support children in their play with well trained staff, including a TA trained specifically to work with under fives and teachers committed to making learning fun and purposeful. We encourage students and parent helpers to join us and offer support to them to enable them to facilitate purposeful play.
- At Brookvale we want children to explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world, to practice and build up ideas, concepts, skills and feel confident to take risks and make mistakes. We want children to learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules, to think creatively and imaginatively, to talk with others as they investigate and solve problems and express fears of anxieties in a controlled and safe situation.

Learning and Teaching in the Foundation Stage

- At Brookvale we understand that an effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who are able to understand and implement the curriculum requirements.
- We as practitioners know that children develop rapidly during the early years, physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally. We aim to provide an environment that supports and extends knowledge, skill and understanding and gives confidence.
- Our teaching is such that all children feel included, secure and valued and we aim to build positive relationships with parents, to work effectively with them and their children.
- The teaching and learning in our foundation stage builds on what children already know and can do. It encourages a positive attitude and disposition to learn and aims to prevent early failure.
- We firmly believe that no child should be disadvantaged or excluded due to their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.
- We believe it is important that our early years curriculum is carefully structured, and should include provision for different starting points to

which children develop, relevant and appropriate content to match the different levels of young children's needs, and planned, purposeful activities and opportunities, both indoors and outdoors.

- We appreciate that not only do children need activities planned by an adult, but also time to engage in activities they play or initiate themselves. Children do not distinguish between work and play, so neither should we.
- Our practitioners are able to respond appropriately to children – using their knowledge of how children develop and learn and engaging children in the learning process.
- We aim to provide rich and stimulating experiences in an environment that is well planned and organised. This provides the structure for teaching within which children explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves, thus enabling them to learn, develop and make good progress.

Parental Involvement and Community Links

- At Brookvale we appreciate that children's first teachers are their parents and that a great deal of learning takes place at home before children come to us.
- We aim to keep parents fully informed regarding their children's progress, through informal chats at home time, inviting them to come into school and work alongside their child, half termly forecasts detailing the curriculum being covered, written reports and formal parents evenings.
- Through discussions and sharing ideas, we at Brookvale value the expertise of parents and family members and welcome their input to enhance the learning experience of the children in our care.
- We feel links with our feeder Nurseries are important to ensure continuity and develop relationships. We aim to have regular meetings and develop opportunities for social interaction between school and nursery.

Personal, Social and Emotional Education and Dispositions for Learning

- We believe that personal and social development and emotional well being and dispositions for learning are central to a child's success in learning in all other areas of development
- We feel that if children are not given the opportunity to gain confidence in themselves and their ability to learn at an early age, this may not develop later and some of the child's potential will be lost forever.

- At Brookvale it is our intention to provide a secure environment and consistent daily routine within which children feel settled and safe and happy to learn.
- To help the children feel settled and secure we intend to manage the transition from home to school in a sensitive and caring manner. Home visits are offered to all which allows for us to follow up concerns, worries or insecurities immediately, and the children attending for a shorter school day initially allows them time at home with their parents to discuss and come to terms with the demands of a new environment.
- Children will be visited at Nursery to familiarise themselves with Teaching Staff and offered the opportunity to visit us at school for an induction morning/afternoon.

Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

- At Brookvale it is our intention to ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged for any reason.
- Through parental questionnaire and discussions we will endeavour to find out about each child's ethnicity, faith and cultural heritage.
- The curriculum that we offer endeavours to respect the different languages, cultural experiences and special needs of our children.
- It is our intention to plan challenging activities for children whose ability is in advance of their language and communication skills.
- Any discrimination in any form will be instantly challenged.
- Any differences in abilities and faiths will be seen as a way of enriching the life and opportunities within our school.

Contexts for Learning

- At Brookvale we acknowledge that young children's learning is holistic. They do not learn in subjects, but learning takes place across all aspects of the daily routine. This learning will be a balance between adult initiated and child initiated learning and adult led.
- The learning that takes place is not only intellectual. As the children learn across a range of contexts, they will develop physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.
- At Brookvale we value and respect child initiated learning.
- We believe that the children's interests and motivations can make good starting points for practitioners teaching.

- We acknowledge that practitioners must make connections between what is planned and the everyday experiences of the children.
- We believe that spoken language is a key skill for thinking and learning.

Teaching and Learning Styles

- We know that children learn in a wide variety of ways.
- We aim to 'tune into' children's preferred styles of learning and support these whenever possible – some children may need access to more active and physical learning situations.
- Young children need to learn through active, first hand experiences that can be repeated to enable consolidation of the ideas and concepts and our teaching style will reflect this.

Independence

- We believe that it is important that the children in our care are encouraged and facilitated to do things for themselves.
- At Brookvale we will provide activities which are developmentally appropriate to help children take responsibility and make decisions for themselves.

Continuity and progression

- To help the children at Brookvale all trained staff working in the foundation stage will participate in discussions relating to children's progress and learning.
- We believe that observation and assessment are essential tools in planning an appropriate and effective curriculum and learning environment.
- Ongoing and informal assessment as well as specific checks on children's understanding of concepts are used to decide where the children need to move onto next.

Links to the Strategies

- During their time in the Reception class, the children will experience all elements of the literacy and numeracy hour, however initially this will be divided up during the day take into account the maturity of the children.
- As the children approach the end of their reception year, more formality will be introduced, as appropriate and discussion with the Year 1 teacher will take place regarding the abilities and maturity of the

children, ensuring appropriate measures are taken for their entry in Year 1.

- At Brookvale we acknowledge that any attempt to implement formal work before children are ready, may well have an adverse effect on the children's disposition to learn.
- The first half term of Year 1 will be less formally structured to make the transition easier from one phase to the next.
- Children in Reception will have, towards the end of the Foundation Stage, regular contact with the Year 1 teacher.
- Year one's classroom environment will take into account the individual needs of the children to KS1 every year.
- Regular meetings take place both formally and informally between the Foundation Staff and Year 1 staff

Assessment, recording and reporting

- Assessment of the children's learning is ongoing and observations noticed by trained staff can be recorded on post it notes and stored on the charts on the wall until time is available for discussion with other staff members. Information is then transferred to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.
- Children have individual profile books in which to store important observations or more formal assessments. Any evidence involving children's work is annotated.
- Structured assessments take place half termly and these are carried out through observation or through specific tasks.
- All assessments inform the results recorded on the pupil profile
- On entry into reception, all children are given a variety of tasks to perform. These are carried out through informal and fun activities. The results of these give staff a thorough idea of children's abilities.
- All parents are offered home visits when children enter Brookvale. Informal discussions, Parents evenings and a written report at the end of the year give staff the opportunity to report children's progress to parents.
- SPTO (School Pupil Tracker Online) is used to record and track childrens assessments. This tool is also used to support teachers in planning activities and lessons that closely match the needs of the pupils.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- As with the remainder of the school, Senior Management will visit to monitor, evaluate and review the work in the Foundation Stage.
- Any feedback given will be shared among practitioners and used to inform planning and changes when and if necessary.

Resources

- Priorities are identified by all practitioners and resources are ordered accordingly, particularly when the budget is allocated and at the start of each new school year.

Staff Development

- At Brookvale we believe that all practitioners need to engage in an ongoing evaluation of their practice and identify areas they feel would benefit from Professional Development.
- All practitioners are given access to training and course details through meetings and internal post. Staff who receive training, feedback to others through staff meetings and demonstration.
- Senior Management and Coordinators distribute course details and keep records of staff training, staff fill in course evaluations and give to the Deputy Head.
- Staff in EYFS receive training bespoke to early years practice.

Policy drawn up by: Mrs J Maskell (DHT)

Date: 10th November 2017

Ratified by the Governing Body

Signature _____
(Chair of the Governors)

Date: _____

This policy will be reviewed November 2018