



Balksbury Federation Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

Early Years Education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives and is an education that encompasses all learning. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of Early Years at our federation.

The Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to five years.

Hampshire County Council Guidance states:

Children are entitled to 38 weeks of school in their first (reception) year of school. Parents are entitled to request that their child attend part-time sessions (mornings and/or afternoons) or to defer their child's entry until later in the year. After talking with you about your child's age, experience in early year's settings, how ready your child is for school and the arrangements put in place by the federation for the new intake, the Headteacher will agree with you the timetable for your child's entry. In Hampshire, all children holding places for a reception place are expected to be attending full-time by the start of the summer term.

You must discuss any plans to delay your child's start with the Headteacher to ensure the federation is aware of your request.

By law, children have to be in full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Parents of summer-born children wishing to defer their child's entry to federation until the start of Year 1 cannot hold a place offered for Year R (Reception); a new application for a place in Year 1 will be required.

Children born from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2021 started in September 2025

Children born from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2022 will start in September 2026

Rationale

At Balksbury Infant School, we are inclusive therefore; we are committed to provide the opportunities that will enable every child, regardless of gender, race, ability, or disability to gain in knowledge and understanding. There is no limit to achievement!

Children joining our federation have already learnt a great deal. Parents are their first educators! Many have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community. The Early Years' education we offer our children is based on the following values:

- Our curriculum has a structure for learning for a range of starting points
- Our curriculum offers content that matches the interests, and needs of the children
- Our curriculum has a range of indoor and outdoor provision
- Our curriculum is inclusive for all abilities
- Our federation provides a rich and stimulating environment

Aims

The curriculum for Early Years Foundation Stage at Balksbury Infant is underpinned by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children through the Early Learning Goals:

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking
- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships
- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Comprehension
- Word Reading
- Writing
- Number
- Numerical Patterns
- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- The Natural World
- Creating Materials
- Being Imaginative and Expressive

The vision for our curriculum is that we take the learning to the children not the children to the learning and we foster an explorative and play based approach.

Procedures and Guidelines

Entitlement

During the reception year, children are given a wealth of opportunities and well-planned activities to develop in all the 7 areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage profile.

Each child is viewed as an individual with specific needs being met in appropriate ways, and with individuality being encouraged. Independence is fostered and each child is encouraged to reach their full potential. During the Reception Year we embed the characteristics of learning and reflect on the different ways that children learn. These are:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

Classroom Organisation

We ensure suitable learning opportunities for all children by:

- Developing independence and self-management through continuous provision
- Supporting learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor spaces
- Using a range of approaches and opportunities that provide first-hand experiences

- Giving clear explanations and making appropriate interventions to extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- Identifying progress through observations and assessments and future learning needs of children, which are regularly shared with parents. In addition, parent share via Google Classroom with the federation
- Providing differentiated activities to meet each child's individual needs
- Encouraging good communication and trust between staff and parents to support children in feeling secure
- Stating clear aims for our work, and regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do
- Understanding how children develop and learn
- Identify regularly the training needs of all adults working with the Foundation Stage
- Providing a key person who supports each child with their individual needs

Play in the Foundation Stage

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise 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.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The experiences that our children meet enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

Throughout the Reception Year in our federation, children have planned mathematics and literacy lessons. The teacher will initially address the requirements in a flexible way but, as part of the smooth transition to Key Stage 1, they will put the literacy and mathematics lessons into operation as the year progresses. In the summer Term, children are introduced to English and Maths books in readiness for Key Stage 1.

There are daily opportunities to develop reading, phonics and handwriting skills through planned and differentiated activities in line with the rest of the federation. The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning through the Foundation Stage, which is flexible in accordance with the children's interests and needs. The federation aims for each child to achieve their expected level within the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

We make frequent and regular assessments of children's learning, and we use the information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, discussions and work sampling.

On entry each child will be assessed against a baseline assessment which is completed during the first half term in school. We also use Google Classroom to consider all the feedback parents send in from home throughout the year.

The Role of Parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- A tailored 'Butterflies Transition Programme' for parents as well as for their child. This provides sessions to support parents including induction information

- A home visit to talk about the needs of a child. We recommend that children are present during these meetings
- A 'Catch the Teacher' meeting in the first half term to discuss your child settling in
- An open door policy for parents to talk to the child's teacher informally if there are any concerns
- Offering parents an option of which pattern of entry would suit their child best

Pre-School Liaison

We build close liaisons between school and pre-schools including visits, sharing good practice and good communication regarding transition of the children. Teachers discuss individual children and collate transition information.

Staffing, Accommodation and Resources

At Balksbury Infants there are three Year R classes each with a qualified Early Years Teacher and the support of a qualified Learning Support Assistant. These classes sit at the end of the Infant building and has its own enclosed outdoor area with a canopy and copse. Classrooms are well equipped with a range of good quality resources, carpeted areas and working area. There is also a Year R communal area for a variety of continuous provision activities.

Health and Wellbeing

At Balksbury, the health, safety and wellbeing of our children are central to all aspects of our practice. During snack and lunch times, a qualified paediatric first aider is always present to ensure immediate response in the event of any choking incidents, which are promptly recorded on Arbor in accordance with our safeguarding procedures. As part of our Personal, Social and Emotional Development curriculum, we actively promote good health practices. This includes educating children on oral hygiene, the importance of regular tooth brushing, and the value of visiting the dentist.

Policy review Autumn 2026