

Overview of Early Years Foundation Stage

The children follow a broad and balanced curriculum, our aim being to achieve continuity and progression through the school with equal opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in a meaningful context both within the classroom and when accessing the excellent outdoor environments Buckingham Primary School offers.

FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM (Nursery and Reception)

The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning. The Foundation Stage prepares children for learning in Key Stage 1 and is consistent with the Early Years Foundation Stage and areas of the National Curriculum. Inside and outside structured play is an essential part of the teaching and learning process in both. We all learn in different ways and at different rates. 'Playing and exploring', 'active learning' and 'creating and thinking critically' are vital learning characteristics that provide opportunities for learning.

There are seven areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Curriculum which comprises of three Prime areas and four Specific areas. These are as follows:

Prime areas –

- communication and language;
- physical development;
- personal, social and emotional development

Communication and Language

Through communication and language children are given opportunities to talk and respond to adults and each other in a rich language environment. Children will explore, enjoy, learn about and use words in a broad range of contexts and experience a rich variety of opportunities to develop confidence and skills in expressing themselves. The children develop their listening skills through the use of stories, songs, tapes, circle times and in role play. This will help them to practice and extend the range of vocabulary and communication skills they use, and help them learn to listen carefully. Words and books are accessible in all learning areas set up indoors and outdoors with adults intervening to model the use of appropriate vocabulary, to listen to children's talk and to encourage further discussions and enrich conversations.

Physical Development

In both the indoor and outdoor environments the children are encouraged to develop both their gross and fine motor skills through opportunities to be active and interactive. The use of wheeled vehicles, small PE equipment used for games, construction using wooden bricks, large scale art projects and access to gardens, sand and water play, to name but a few activities all support children in developing their co-ordination, control and movement. Children are encouraged to understand the importance of physical activity and what they need to do to be healthy and safe. Their regular access to snacks of fruit and regular cooking opportunities enable children to begin to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Through a wide and varied selection of activities, i.e. circle time, show and tell, stories, sharing home life through learning journeys and role play, all children are given opportunities to discuss their families, friends, ideas and feelings. It is important that each child feels valued so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted. The group, paired and individual support given to children if necessary helps them to form positive relationships and to develop respect for each other. Children learn to play co-operatively. High expectations of acceptable behaviour are continually addressed with the children. Social skills and learning to manage their feelings, in the context of the activities provided, supports children at all times. Positive praise is used to emphasise children's abilities to develop their confidence and self-worth.

Specific areas –

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world;
- expressive arts and design

Literacy

Children have daily phonics teaching following the Letters and Sounds programme when they are encouraged to link sounds and letters and begin to read and write. In phonics the children are grouped according to the phase relevant to their stage of development and understanding to address the different levels of ability and to enable the pace to allow for consolidation and challenge. The phonics is supported by the phonics reading scheme, games, interactive whiteboard activities and when the children experience group reading, individual reading, class stories, library sessions and story sacks. The children are given access to a wide range of reading materials in the form of books, poems, leaflets, comics, computer activities and the use of electronic Story-phones.

Mathematics

Mathematical development encompasses understanding and the development and improvement of skills in using of numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and to describe shapes, spaces and measures. The children have many activities available in the indoor and outdoor areas which help them learn, support, enjoy, explore and challenge their mathematical understanding. The environments aim to be 'number rich' so that children appreciate that numbers are all around them and they can make mathematical links in cross curricular learning e.g. tallying football scores, reading prices when shopping, weighing in cookery, seeing what time the café opens etc.

Understanding the World

This involves children making sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment. This area incorporates science, geography, history, religious education and ICT. Children have access to computers in classrooms and in the computer suite, interactive whiteboards and a variety of ICT equipment, Bee-Bots, walkie-talkies, digital cameras and much more.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children are given opportunities to explore, play with and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design and technology, music, movement, dance and role play. The learning environments are very well resourced to provide opportunities and encouragement for collaborative and imaginative play to develop children's creativity.