



CURRICULUM POLICY

Introduction

Berkhamstead Day Nurseries are committed to delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) which forms the first part of the National Curriculum and focuses on the distinct needs of children from birth to the age of 5 years.

Our Curriculum Aims: -

- To meet all requirements of the EYFS; staying up to date with any curriculum developments and legislative updates.
- To deliver the curriculum in a varied, balanced, and inspiring way that is relevant to the child, related to the real world and deep rooted in PLAY.
- To tailor all activities to meet children's individual interests, stages of development and learning needs, ensuring every child receives a unique learning journey.
- To allocate every child with a Key Person and Buddy who is responsible for documenting and ensuring their key children make sufficient progress through the EYFS, identifying those children that might need extra support and reporting this to the SENDCo.
- To ensure that every child has positive experiences of success at their own level, developing confidence, independence, and motivation for learning in the future. "What the child can do" will always be our starting point.
- To provide a curriculum which offers equal learning and development opportunities for all children within the Nurseries.
- To work in partnership with parents and/or other settings or agencies to support and enhance the learning and development of children.

Our curriculum seeks to promote a positive self-image and independence within a supportive and caring environment. Attainment of skills and factual knowledge is combined with instilling values, positive attitudes and behaviour towards others. We recognise that children learn best when they feel safe, secure, and nurtured. Therefore, there is a strong focus on children's happiness and wellbeing as being the basis for all other learning.

Policy reviewed – January 2025

Policy to be next reviewed – January 2026 Day Nursery Manager

The four overarching principles of the EYFS underpin our everyday practice: -

- **A Unique Child:** Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments:** Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.
- **Learning and Development:** Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Learning and Development Areas

The EYFS splits the 7 areas of learning into Prime and Specific areas. The prime areas are the starting point in which children learn and form the foundations for learning in the specific areas.

The Prime Areas:

1. Personal, social and emotional development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- positive approaches to learning and finding out about the world around them;
- confidence in themselves and their ability to do things, and valuing their own achievements;
- their ability to get on, work and make friendships with other people, both children and adults;
- their awareness of, and being able to keep to, the rules which we all need to help us to look after ourselves, other people, and our environment;
- their ability to dress and undress themselves, and look after their personal hygiene needs;
- their ability to expect to have their ways of doing things respected and to respect other people's ways of doing things.

2. Communication and language

Our programme supports children to develop:

- conversational skills with one other person, in small groups and in large groups to talk with and listen to others;
- their vocabulary by learning the meaning of - and being able to use - new words;
- their ability to use words to describe their experiences;
- their ability to listen to, and talk about, stories;

Ability to learn and recite a variety of songs and rhymes.

3. Physical development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- increasing control over the large movements that they can make with their arms, legs, and bodies, so that they can run, jump, hop, skip, roll, climb, balance and lift;
- increasing control over the small movements they can make with their arms, wrists, and hands, so that they can pick up and use objects, tools, and materials; and their understanding about the importance of, and how to look after, their bodies.

The Specific Areas:

4. Mathematics

Our programme supports children to develop:

- understanding and ideas about how many, how much, how far and how big;
- understanding and ideas about patterns, the shape of objects and parts of objects, and the amount of space taken up by objects;
- understanding that numbers help us to answer questions about how many, how much, how far and how big;
- understanding and ideas about how to use counting to find out how many; and
- early ideas about the result of adding more or taking away from the amount we already have.

5. Understanding of the world

Our programme supports children to develop:

- knowledge about the natural world and how it works;
- knowledge about the man-made world and how it works;
- their learning about how to choose, and use, the right tool for a task;
- their learning about computers, how to use them and what they can help us to do;
- their skills on how to put together ideas about past and present and the links between them;
- their learning about their locality and its special features; including the wider school community through access to shared facilities and visits; and
- their learning about their own and other cultures, including others traditions and religious holidays.

Learning about different familial experiences and differences in home lives through role play.

6. Expressive arts and design

Our programme supports children to develop:

- the use of paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories, and role-play to express their ideas and feelings; and
- their interest in the way that paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories, and role-play can be used to express ideas and feelings.

Understanding of colours and what happens when they are mixed.

7. Literacy

Our programme supports children to develop:

- their knowledge of the sounds and letters that make up the words we use;
- knowledge of how to handle books and of the fact that they can be a source of stories and information;
- knowledge of the purposes for which we use writing;
- making their own attempts at writing

Although the EYFS Learning and Development areas are presented as separate areas, we recognise that for children everything links and nothing is compartmentalised. As the EYFS states:

“None of these areas of Learning and Development can be delivered in isolation from others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. All the areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.”

The EYFS Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The EYFS also identifies different learning styles in children. These are the Characteristics of Effective Learning: -

- **Playing & Exploring** is when children show curiosity about their environment, represent their experiences through play and show a willingness to join in and explore new things. It is split into the following categories: -
 - ◆ Finding out and exploring
 - ◆ Playing with what they know
 - ◆ Being willing to 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** is when children become engrossed in their activity, persevere when they meet challenges and show pleasure in meeting their own goals. It is split into the following categories: -
 - ◆ Being involved and concentrating
 - ◆ Persevering
 - ◆ Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** is all about how children think, the links they make in their learning and the ideas they generate. It is split into the following categories: -
 - ◆ Having their own ideas
 - ◆ Making links in their learning
 - ◆ Choosing their own ways to do things

Curriculum Planning

Our curriculum is tailored to meet individual children's interests and next steps in learning. This is achieved through our 'In the Moment' planning system, which allows practitioners the freedom to respond and extend children's interests in a flexible programme of learning. A balance of adult and child-led activities are planned for on a daily basis, and activities, resources and the environment are evaluated and modified to reflect the learning needs and interests of the children. The age and development needs of the children are always considered when planning learning experiences. This flexible approach to planning ensures that every child receives a varied and stimulating learning experience.

Whilst we recognise the importance of listening to children and responding to their interests, we also acknowledge that in order to plan for a broad curriculum which promotes equal opportunities and celebrates other faiths and cultures, there must be a certain element of adult-led learning.

Working in partnership with parents

We understand and fully support the positive link between children's attainment and parents being engaged and involved in their child's learning. At Berkhamstead Day Nurseries parents have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

- valued and respected;
- kept informed;
- consulted;
- involved; and
- included at all levels.

We use a variety of approaches to engage parents and keep them informed of their child's progress. These include:

- Involving parents in all evaluative summaries of a child's attainment (summative assessments). The Baseline, Transitions, 6 monthly assessments, and Two-Year Check assessments are shared with parents and parents can contribute to the reviews. We recognise that children behave differently at home so parents may be aware of learning that we have not yet witnessed at Nursery. This is why it is important we work with parents to get a complete overview of a child's stage of learning and development.
- Parents are invited to attend Parents' Evenings twice a year. This is an opportunity for parents to discuss their child's progress and any concerns and go through their next steps with their key person.
- Daily contact and feedback to parents at the end of every Nursery session, as well as logging on the Famly app.
- Photo frames in each classroom show what the children have been doing how these activities link to their learning.
- Focus child Forms - parents are invited to share their child's learning at home and work towards a learning outcome.
- Having an 'open door' policy where the planning and next steps are available for parents to view at any time. Parents are also welcome to contribute to the planning and their child's learning.
- Regular Famly posts to invite parents into setting for events such as stay and plays and other celebrations and festivals, and sharing moments of achievements through our values leaves and wow moments.
- All about me forms are given to the parents regularly to ensure we maintain regular communication and up to date knowledge of the child's development and progress at home.

Our approach to learning, development and assessment

The Curious Way

Here at our Berkhamstead Day Nurseries we want to promote children's natural sense of awe and wonder. We achieve this by using the Curiosity Approach which blends together various Early Years Pedagogies namely: Reggio, Montessori, Steiner, and Te Whariki. This approach encourages the use of natural, open-ended, and real tools and materials, to encourage children's imagination and enquiry-based learning. This approach to discovery and learning perfectly complements the EYFS, which reinforces that PLAY should be the primary mode in which young children learn. Play-based learning is at the heart of all we do at our Day Nurseries. Our learning environments are carefully planned and set up to inspire curiosity and discovery and Nursery Practitioners are trained to interact sensitively and extend children's play and learning. The adult's role is therefore to facilitate learning rather than teach. Children are encouraged to try new experiences and engage in a variety of activities; however, it is always up to the child if they wish to partake. As the EYFS states, learning opportunities are introduced through a careful balance of child and adult-led play activities, both indoors and out.

Assessment

Formative Assessment

Regular assessments of children are crucial to gain an understanding of a child's overall development and consequently what their next steps in learning should be. Ongoing assessment or observational assessment is an integral part of everyday practice. Children are observed during their free play and interactions and also through planned activities. Parents also play a part in providing information regarding their child's learning and achievement at home. The information gathered is used to build up a picture of each child's capabilities, to identify where they are in their own development and to plan ways to extend and challenge their learning.

Formative assessment methods include:

- written observations
- examples of children's work
- photos
- quotes
- practitioner and parent knowledge of what they know the child can do (might not be written observation)
- videos/transcripts
- wow moments

Summative Assessment

The EYFS requires Early Years Practitioners to review children's progress and share a summary with parents at two different points;

- The Two-Year Check reviews progress in the prime areas between the ages of 24 and 36 months
- The EYFS Profile reviews progress at the end of the EYFS (usually completed at the end of the Reception year at school)

As well as the mandatory two-year check, we also review children's progress:

- When they first start at Nursery (Baseline Assessment) to gain an overview of what the child can already do. This gives the starting point for their unique learning journey through the EYFS. Parental involvement is crucial at this stage so we ask parents to complete their own baseline summary.
- Each time they move up to the next age group (Transition Assessment), to gain an idea of how they are progressing and to inform the next group about the child's development and next steps.
- The Gloucestershire Transition Record is completed at the end of your child's preschool year and is sent to your child's new Reception teacher. This gives the teacher a summary of your child's progress along the EYFS.

The EYFS Development Matters is used as a guide to make 'best fit judgements' about whether a child is showing typical development for their age across the Prime and Specific areas. Here at our Berkhamstead Day Nurseries we recognise and understand that every child develops at their own rate. A child that is seen to be consistently falling behind typical development will be closely observed and supported. If concerns were to arise over a child's development, the parents will be kept informed and, if after close observation and support from the key person and Special Education Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SEND CO),

the child still was not making sufficient progress, outside agencies may be involved (See **SEND Policy**).

Online Learning Journals

Every child will have their own online Learning Journal, which holds all their formative and summative assessments, as well as photos and any other development or curriculum records. Our online Learning Journals are always accessible to parents which they can access at any time. The Learning Journal is a way of celebrating achievements and is a working document that is added to throughout your child's time at Nursery. Parental contributions to the Learning Journal are welcomed through “wow vouchers” and “values leaves”.

The Nursery Day

Here at our Berkhamstead Day Nurseries we believe that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the day in the setting are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that they are a valued member of the setting;
- ensure the safety of each child;
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group; and
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

The Day Nurseries organises the day so that children can take part in a variety of child-led and adult-led activities, both indoors and outdoors. These take account of children's changing energy levels throughout the day. The Nurseries cater for children's individual needs for rest and quiet activities during the day.

Outdoor Learning

Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Experiencing the outdoor elements and nature provides a great learning experience; we therefore place equal importance on the outdoor learning environment as we do on the indoors. Children have access to the outdoor environments daily. Outdoor activities will only be restricted in the event that weather conditions make it dangerous to go out. Children need to have suitable outdoor clothing so that they may participate in outdoor learning no matter what the weather.