

# CARE LEARNING & PLAY WITHIN THE EARLY YEARS

## **POLICY STATEMENT/AIMS**

At Bright Beginnings, we believe that children benefit most from early years' education when parents and settings work together in partnership. We value and actively seek their involvement when planning for children's next steps and welcome their involvement in nursery life.

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by Bright Beginnings helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. We believe that the right kind of experiences and support will help children to be more confident and motivated to become effective learners throughout their life.

By using the Early Years Foundation Stage documentation, input from parent and observations within the setting our practitioners plan the environment and activities which celebrate the uniqueness of each individual child. 'Letters & Sounds' document is also utilised within our daily group planning that is offered.

Play is now central to development within most early years' settings, at Bright Beginnings we recognise that Play is central to all aspects of learning from birth onwards and that research shows that children operate at their highest level when immersed in play. We do however recognise that it is unwise to assume that children are necessarily learning or, developing their learning potential whilst playing and therefore our practitioners will sensitively enhance the complexity of the play to enable the children to benefit.

We organise the day so that children can take part in a variety of child initiated and adult led activities. These take account for the children's changing energy levels throughout the day.

At Bright Beginnings, we cater for children's individual needs for rest and quiet times as well as their need to learn and develop whilst exploring outdoors. Our free flow approach to play within the Early Years Unit facilitates each child to develop the ability to recognise and manage their own play and rest needs.

Risk-taking is an essential feature of any play provision and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time playing. At Bright Beginnings, we aim to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of our stimulating, challenging and controlled learning environment. We aim to manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from serious harm. Often asking the children 'Are you safe' instead of 'Be careful' to allow the child to risk access the situation for themselves.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

### **LONG TERM PLANS C23**

Our long-term planning provides a structure which helps us to ensure that we cover all the areas of learning and development and the Principles in the EYFS.

At the beginning of each academic year, we consider: -

The routine for the nursery, how this will be reflected in each room and how this can provide a structure whilst being flexible enough to cater for individual children's needs and spontaneity.

The continuous provision, ensuring this is age and stage appropriate and provides a flexible platform to be enhanced to follow children's interest and developmental needs.

Consideration is given to any provision which needs to be made for children with Special Educational Needs or English as an additional Language.

We also identify any special occasions that we plan to celebrate throughout the year and any visitors we may be able to plan for to enhance children's learning experiences. (A Festivals & Celebrations folder is also available to all staff to access, with resources & plans. Long term plans will be completed at a planning meeting with the Directors, Nursery Manager, EYP and the Team Leaders.

### **MEDIUM TERM PLANS**

Our medium-term plans provide the assessment needs of specific groups of children and individual children within the setting. The medium-term plan ensures that we provide a coverage of the aspects within the children's Learning & Development. The medium-term planning process will include a review of the medium-term plan C22 for each group of children and Personal Play Plans C6 for each child.

Medium term Plan form C22 will be used to record: -

Aspects for each area of learning we will be focusing on for the half term period, usually within 2 week blocks using a Planning sheets that we use to deliver adult-led activities.

Ideas for enhancing the role play area and continuous provision through identified children's interest & innovative ideas for children to experience and explore

These will be reviewed on a half term basis at a meeting with the Nursery Manager, EYP and the Team Leaders.

### **SHORT TERM PLANS**

Personalised Play Plans will be prepared during non-term time ready for each new half term. Key persons are responsible for preparing their key child's Play Plans. The Play Plan content will be used on a fortnightly basis at a staff meeting so that group planning for individual children can take place. Children's next steps will be listed on the planning sheet to enhance the nurseries continuous provision in preparation for staff to be deployed to interact with the individual child to develop their learning. Staff will utilise the Play Plan as a working document and record achievements & made amendments as necessary. Team Leaders are responsible for preparing a 'Focus Child Grid' to ensure that all children have equal adult interaction in their play to develop each individual child's learning.

Personal Play Plans C6 will be completed by key Persons and used to record:

- What a child can do
- What a child is interested in
- Any identified schema's
- The child's characteristics of effective learning
- What the child's next steps are
- What parents can do at home to support their child's learning
- Any linked activities with other care providers

Staff completing Play Plans on a child who has an identified SEN should consult with the setting SENCO so that the child's Play Plan can complement the child's PLP (Pupil Learning Profile).

Key persons will complete the 'Personalised Provision' Sheets, which identifies enhanced provisions for children to engage in, in which adult interaction is included to advance learning. They will use personalised Play Plans and recent observations to inform these activities. Although the Personalised Play Plan is a working document and used throughout the half term, the key person will evaluate the Play Plan at the end of the half term to help identify next steps, evaluate children's Characteristics of Effective Learning and to ensure that we are responding appropriately to children's development needs.

Team leaders in conjunction with key workers, will complete a Weekly Planning for their room on a weekly basis. They will use the medium-term plans, Personal Play Plans and recent observations to inform adult led activities and enhancements to the continuous provision. They should seek to identify enhancement and opportunities which reflect the characteristics of effective early learning.

Large group activities have been pre-planned, although all staff recognise the importance of altering the delivery to suit the child's children's characteristics of learning and possibly the content depending on children's interests. Large groups are to be carried out in varying sized group depending on the content on the activity. This can vary from a group of 6 through to a group of 12 children. Large group pre-planned activities have been based around the 'Letters & Sounds document' & the research that has been carried out by the EYP on bridging the gap for school readiness.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Observations should be an integral part of everyday practice and should be made on the tablet and for the correct tag to be used.

Observations made by parents should be encouraged and recorded in the same way, and these are to be used as part of the planning and assessment process.

Observations must be made over time in different situations and at various times of the day to cover the breath of learning.

An observation describes an action, event or a moment in time, staff should therefore avoid making assessments or negative comments.

Photographs, recordings and samples of work are all useful observations of what a child can do and are actively encouraged within the setting.

Observations should be made whilst children play in self-chosen activities as well as planned adult directed activities.

Observations should note the child's interests, passions and concerns as well as how the child is learning.

'Tracking' observations are utilised within the setting to aid staff in recognising the child's preferences, how the environment is enabling children and children's current areas of learning.

For an observation to be useful it requires: -

- An understanding of child development and how children learn
- Knowledge of observational techniques
- A general idea of what to look for
- An ability to keep an open mind, so that the unexpected and significant can be recorded

- An ability to write meaningful notes quickly
- Observations should be captured using the tablet & these will go towards creating the child's Electronical Learning Journal.

### **ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATION**

Key Persons will analyse all observations to explore what learning is taking place, identifying what is significant or new. The key considerations need to be, what the observations tell us about the child's learning and development and what aspects of learning and development are evident. The observation should also help us to recognise the child's characteristics of effective learning.

### **WHEN PREPARING THE NEXT PERSONALISED PLAY PLAN STAFF WILL CONSIDER:**

Personal Play plan Evaluations will be completed by key persons each half term to review:

- What they know about the child's learning and development
- What they have noticed about how they learn
- What they have noticed about the child's interests
- What the child has achieved or shown an interest in at home
- Has the child shown any schematic concerns?
- What the child's next steps are

### **ELECTRONIC LEARNING JOURNALS**

An initial baseline of the child will be made based on what the staff member has observed from the child and the contribution of the parent's baseline. The parents baseline will be carried out using an electronical version of 'What to Expect When' to make the EYFS statements clearer for parents. The initial baseline should be completed within the child's settling period and the child's initial Play Plan should be completed before the child's first full session.

Key person is responsible for evaluating the child's learning and completing a progress check throughout the half term and before the child's next Play Plan is wrote.

### **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS & 2-YEAR-OLD PROGRESS CHECKS**

A summative assessment of a child's progress is a requirement of the EYFS, staff will use the electronic version of a summative assessment on the EYlog to fulfil this requirement in November and June each year, whereas staff working with children who are 2-year-old will complete an electronic 2-Year-old Progress Check.

Key persons will make a short-written statement about the child's progress against each of the Prime areas and where appropriate the Specific Areas.

The form also requires comments in respect of the child's strengths and areas for concern. Additionally, key persons must identify the next steps for each child and strategies to be employed to address any areas of concern.

Particular attention should be paid, where there are significant emerging concerns, in which case key persons should consult with the setting SENCO, who will provide further help and support.

This information will be shared with parents at parent's evenings.

## **MODERATION**

The Nursery manager or EYP will attend a Children's Centre transition meeting to ensure that the nursery is applying the same assessment standards as other settings and schools within the Children's Centre Area.

The nursery manager will facilitate a levelling meeting with Team Leaders and the EYP to ensure consistency of assessment throughout the nursery.

The EYP will facilitate levelling meeting biannually with each team to ensure consistency of assessment.

## **ELECTRONIC TRACKING**

The Directors, Nursery Manager & EYP will use the electronic tracking as a levelling exercise across a broad section of children within the nursery to monitor the progress of individual and groups of children, identify any gaps, areas for concern or need for improvement within the nursery.

This information will be used to inform planning and may be used as a performance indicator for staff.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Each child Learning Journal is kept on the tablet so that staff and parents have easy access to this information.

Other files are kept within the play room within cupboards and stored neatly on shelves.

Other file contents include:

- Past Personal Play Plans
- Past Adult-led planning
- Past 'Personalised Provision'

## **KEY PERSONS**

### **AIMS**

To provide all children who attend the nursery with a designated key person. This person will be responsible for tailoring care, supporting their emotional well-being, learning and development opportunities for their individual key children. Key persons will also be responsible for working closely in partnership with their key children's parents.

We also aim to ensure that a second key person is assigned to each child in case the child's key person is absent for whatever reason.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At Bright Beginnings, every child will be assigned a key person. Key persons will usually be level 3 qualified staff or above, however other staff with at least 6 months' experience may be given key worker responsibilities at the nursery manager's discretion.

Key persons will be responsible for a maximum of 12 key children.

Key persons who are either Team Leaders or assigned to children with Special Educational Needs may take a smaller number of key children due to their added responsibility and work load.

Key persons will be assigned as the child starts the nursery by the nursery manager or team leader; so that the assigned member of staff can begin to build a bond/relationship with the child and support them to settle in. However, if the child naturally develops a stronger bond

with another member of staff this will be addressed and that person will take the child into their key group.

If the key person is absent due to sickness, days off or annual leave a second key person will be assigned to every child to ensure that the child has a familiar person responsible for them.

Key person's will tailor the care to their individual child and take responsibility for their care, learning and development whilst within the setting.

Key persons are responsible for supporting their key children during 'meal times', transition times i.e. 'Going outside' and when carrying out personal/intimate care situations.

Key persons are responsible for establishing learning journals for each key child and ensuring that these are up to date and available for parents to share.

Key Person's will also be responsible for working in partnership with the key children's parents.

### **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE KEY PERSON**

To initially support the child emotionally to settle into the nursery setting and to build a picture of their current stages of development and their current interests, schemas, preferences for play and characteristics of effective learning. (See settling in policy)

To role model to the child how to explore and play in the provision whilst supporting their ability to understand nursery boundaries and expectations of how to engage and interact with other children.

To liaise with parents about their children on a daily basis and at a parent evening twice annually. (Refer to later section)

To liaise with outside agencies who may be involved or required to be involved with the child/family. Including schools that the children will transition onto.

To recognise any attachment or development needs and respond appropriately. Working with the setting SENCO and possible other outside agencies.

To use the founded interest, schemas, 'Can do' observations, knowledge of their current stages of development and their characteristics of learning to produce play plans every half term, inputting to the unit planning process to ensure the development needs of their key children are reflected in plans and enhancements to the environment.

They are responsible for collecting written observations and photographs of children at play, to inform the planning and assessment process.

They will complete weekly activity play plans for their group of children, deliver and evaluate these to ensure we are responding appropriately to children's developmental needs.

They are responsible for completing the assessment records, summative assessments and 2-year-old progress.

Key persons are responsible for taking appropriate measures to reflect and utilise information from the 'Tracking' to further support individual children as required or to further improve certain learning opportunities for groups of children.

### **KEY PERSON'S WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

Each room is responsible for displaying their key person's groups; including secondary key persons assigned to children.

Parents will be encouraged to converse with parents about their child's learning and development on a daily basis through the use of the daily handover. Where possible key

person's will sign their children out and highlight new interests, skills and any new developments they may have witnessed to facilitate and promote good working relationships.

Parents will be invited to Parents Evenings twice a year to discuss their child's interests, learning and development. Parents will be given the opportunity to review their child's Learning Journal and past Play Plans. However, these documents can be viewed at any time at a parent's request.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY/SENSITIVE/INFORMATION/SHARING INFORMATION**

Responsibility of every employee to respect confidential information and refrain from disclosing such information without the consent from a parent/carer. (Refer to Confidentiality Policy)

Sensitive information should be stored by the nursery manager in a secure filing cabinet or locked room. (See Recording of Information Policy)

There may be times when BBDN need to override our confidentiality policy, for example if a child protection issue occurs. (See Safe Guarding Policy)

### **RECORDING / STORING OF INFORMATION**

It is important that all staff who record information use appropriate terms when completing paperwork. It is vital that information is factual and objective. Personal emotions and subjectivity must be allowed to enter documents.

All nursery documents are legal documents and maybe used in a court of law. The company is required to keep all documents for that use for 21 years and 8 months (See Recording of Information Policy).