Blaenavon Heritage Voluntary Controlled Primary School



FOUNDATION PHASE POLICY (April 2020)

Author:	Mrs C Crew
Written:	March 2013
Review:	April 2020
Ratified:	1st May 2020
COG:	
Next Review:	April 2021

FOUNDATION PHASE POLICY

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of BHVC Primary School in relation to the teaching and learning outcomes of the children in the Foundation Phase. The policy is a framework, within which all staff work, and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. The policy should be read in conjunction with The Foundation Phase in Wales' Framework for Children's Learning, which sets out what pupils should be taught in different areas of learning, and in conjunction with the new Numeracy and Literacy Frameworks, and the Digital Competency Framework.

In Wales, statutory education begins in the term following a child's fifth birthday. The Foundation Phase is an approach to learning for children from 3-7 years of age.

New Curriculum

We are currently in an exciting time in the reform journey set out in Education in Wales: Our National Mission. The national mission is to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap, and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence. Curriculum for Wales 2022, made in Wales but shaped by the best from around the world, is fundamental to achieving that mission.

For the first time, Wales will have a curriculum which is purpose based on four purposes that articulate what we want our young people to be at 16:

- **Ambitious, capable learners** who are ready to learn throughout their lives.
- **Enterprising, creative contributors** who are ready to play a full part in life and work.
- **Ethical, informed citizens** who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.
- **Healthy, confident individuals** who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Donaldson's Successful Futures

At BHVC our curriculum will offer 'a broad and balanced structure'. This structure will comprise 'Areas of Learning and Experience'. Each of the Areas of Learning and Experience should make distinct and strong contributions to developing the four purposes of the curriculum. Our staff are familiarising

themselves with the Successful Future's document and its Areas of Learning. Donaldson's strategic vision is being developed throughout the school, with a key focus regarding how to translate this into practice for our setting and children. The school aims to adopt Donaldson's Areas of Learning across the curriculum, beginning with the Health and Well-being subject. In addition, we hope to inspire and challenge our learners by encouraging them to lead their own learning through decision making and metacognition.

Curriculum for Wales 2022 is designed as a national framework for learners aged 3 to 16 to support professionals to develop our school level curricula: allowing us the flexibility to provide teaching and learning which meets the specific needs of our learners in their contexts and communities.

The refined Curriculum for Wales 2022 will then be made available in January 2020 for use in September 2022 by primary schools. Therefore there will be no need for a separate Foundation Phase curriculum. At present, the current Foundation Phase framework and baseline assessment will remain in place. This document will now continue to outline our present Foundation Phase Policy within BHVC Primary School.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our delivery of the Foundation Phase is based on the statutory entitlement as set out in the Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7 year olds in Wales. The Foundation Phase is delivered by a team of teachers and support staff and, where possible, recommended staff-pupil ratios are adhered to.

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of BHVC Primary is to provide a firm foundation on which all aspects of education are built. We aim to provide a curriculum that is broad and balanced in content and wide-ranging in approach, helping to ensure future progress and success. We believe that we should create a learning environment that is motivating, exciting and caring, in order to contribute to the children's positive self-esteem and to foster a love of learning.

At BHVC, we recognise that the Foundation Phase supports this philosophy. It is based on the principle that early years' provision should offer a sound foundation for future learning through a developmentally appropriate curriculum. It seeks to bring consistency and continuity to children's education at such an all-important period in their development.

The Foundation Phase places great emphasis on children learning by doing. At BHVC our youngest pupils will be given opportunities to gain first hand experiences through play and active involvement. They will be given time to develop their speaking and listening skills and to become confident in their reading and writing abilities.

At BHVC the Foundation Phase encompasses the developmental needs of children. At the centre of the statutory curriculum framework lies the holistic development of children and their skills across the curriculum, building on their previous learning experiences, knowledge and skills. The Foundation Phase curriculum promotes equality of opportunity and values, and celebrates diversity.

Children learn through first-hand experiential activities with the serious business of 'play' providing the vehicle. Through their play, children practise and consolidate their learning, play with ideas, experiment, take risks, solve problems, and make decisions individually, in small and in large groups. First-hand experiences allow children to develop an understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. The development of children's self-image and feelings of self-worth and self-esteem are at the core of this phase.

The Foundation Phase curriculum is planned as a progressive framework that spans four years (3 to 7 years) to meet the diverse needs of all children, including those who are at an earlier stage of development and those who are more able.

Throughout their formative years, children's learning develops more rapidly than at any other time. However, progress is not even and children go through periods of rapid development and times when they seem to regress. Therefore, we believe that a curriculum for young children should be appropriate to their stage of learning, rather than focusing solely on age-related outcomes to be achieved.

At BHVC children will move on to the next stages of their learning when they are developmentally ready and at their own pace.

Indoor and outdoor environments that are fun, exciting, stimulating and safe promote children's development and natural curiosity to explore and learn through first-hand experiences. The Foundation Phase environment promotes discovery and independence and a greater emphasis on using the outdoor environment as a resource for children's learning.

AIMS

The overall aims for the children in the Foundation Phase are to:

- Develop positive attitudes and disposition to learning.
- Enjoy the process of learning.
- Experience equality of opportunity in a caring, safe and secure environment.
- Be valued as individuals and acquire self-confidence, independence and self-help skills.
- Develop enquiring minds, encouraging independent thought.
- Gain knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes that relate to all areas of the Curriculum and to life.
- Learn attention skills and persistence, in particular the ability to concentrate.
- Cultivate positive attitudes, values and beliefs and develop an understanding of, and respect for, other people's beliefs and cultures.
- Experience personal achievement and appreciate the achievement of others.
- Develop a positive self-image and an understanding of their value in society.
- Acquire the skills to communicate their needs, feelings and experiences.
- Develop respect and responsibility for self and others.

The teachers and support staff at BHVC make every effort to support and take care of the young children, assisting them in the cloakroom, at lunch time, getting changed for PE and other practical activities, whilst encouraging independence and self-help skills.

WIDER SCHOOL AIMS/ETHOS

The policy is underpinned by the school's vision, aims and values.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

At BHVC we recognise the importance of the role of parents and the significant influence that they have already played in the early education of their child. We wish to build a firm partnership that benefits and enhances the development and well-being of their child. We involve parents and encourage continued involvement and interest by them in their child's education.

In order to ease transition from home to school, new Nursery pupils and their parents are invited in to the nursery for a 'taster session' at the end of the term before they are due to start. The purpose of these sessions is to ease the transition from home to school by providing an opportunity to meet staff, to view the classroom and outdoor area and be introduced to some of the learning experiences and activities.

Each year, all parents of Foundation Phase pupils are invited to 'Meet the Teacher' where they will have the opportunity to meet the staff and view the classroom their child will attend for the next academic year. They are also able to listen to information concerning their child's learning needs for the year, as well as asking any questions or queries before their child starts.

ORGANISATION

We currently have 8 classes in the Foundation Phase (this includes a morning and afternoon session class in the nursery).

Pupils enter the Nursery in the September following their third birthday. (If there are places available, some 3 year-olds may have additional terms in the Nursery, starting in the spring or summer terms). Nursery places are part-time and we have morning and afternoon sessions.

Pupils enter our Reception Classes in the September following their fourth birthday.

At BHVC, we believe that a staged-entry approach ensures a smooth transition for nursery pupils:

- STAGE 1: Parents attend an information evening at the school.
- STAGE 2: Pupils attend the nursery with their parents for an hour session.
- STAGE 3: Pupils attend for an hour on their own
- STAGE 4 onwards: Pupil session times are extended according to need until they are ready to attend for a full session (this is usually on day 4 if the teacher feels the pupil is settled).

This approach is flexible and adapted to suit the needs of individual children.

In order to ease the transition from Nursery to Reception, parents are invited to a meeting where they meet the Reception teachers.

At BHVC, Nursery pupils visit the main school for a number of events during the year, including regular attendance at worship in the school hall. Therefore, we believe that a staged-entry approach into Reception is not necessary in September. Reception teachers and teaching assistants will also have an opportunity to observe a nursery session to become familiar with the children.

AREAS OF LEARNING

At BHVC the indoor classroom and the immediate outdoor areas combine to form the learning environment. This promotes exploration and discovery through first hand experiences. They are fun, exciting, stimulating and safe and promote children's development and natural curiosity to explore and learn.

At BHVC the following seven areas of learning are being developed:

1. Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity;
2. Language, Literacy and Communication Skills;
3. Mathematical Development;
4. Welsh Language Development;
5. Knowledge and Understanding of the World;
6. Physical Development;
7. Creative Development.

These seven areas help practitioners plan the learning environment, activities, experiences and framework for the Curriculum. One experience could provide a child with opportunities to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity is at the heart of the Foundation Phase and is developed across the curriculum.
RE requirements are met across the Areas of Learning.

Children are encouraged to use (and communicate in) Welsh to the best of their ability and, to support this, Welsh is incorporated into activities throughout the day. In order to meet the requirements of the seven areas of learning, topic and theme based approaches are used including the use of the Cornerstones curriculum as well as with resources such as Letters and Sounds and Rigby Star reading schemes.

Personal, Social, and Emotional Development helps children become confident and establish constructive relationships with other children, parents, and adults. Children are encouraged to work independently, concentrate and persevere with their learning and explore new avenues, initiate ideas and solve practical problems. They are encouraged to show respect for themselves and others, take turns and share, express their ideas and feelings and respond appropriately to a variety of experiences. Staff encourage children to be interested, excited and motivated to learn and have increasing awareness of their own needs. They encourage them to respond positively to cultural, social and physical diversity and demonstrate care of the environment and of living things. They will be

encouraged to dress and undress themselves and manage their own personal hygiene.

This area is seen as critical for young children in all aspects of their lives and gives them the best opportunity for success in all areas of learning.

Communication, Language and Literacy helps children to interact with other people, communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up relationships with adults and each other. Children can listen to, enjoy and respond to rhymes, stories, songs, music, non-fiction and poems. They can make up stories and take part in role-play with confidence. They learn to enjoy books and handle them appropriately and with care. They understand that words and pictures carry meaning and that, in English, print is read from left to right and from top to bottom. They come to associate sounds with patterns and syllables and with words and letters and develop good reading skills and write simple stories. The children will develop their writing, using pictures, symbols, letters and familiar words, enabling them to communicate meaning. We have recently bought a cursive handwriting scheme which the whole school follows.

These outcomes cover important aspects of language development and provide the foundation for Literacy. Children will be helped to acquire competence in English as soon as possible, making use, where appropriate, of their advances in talking and listening and becoming readers and writers. Other areas of learning also make a vital contribution to the successful development of Literacy.

Welsh Language Development
The children will also study Welsh in the Foundation Phase. They will be encouraged to enjoy the language through song, stories and rhyme. They will be encouraged to use everyday Welsh and some class routines will be conducted through the medium of Welsh, eg marking the register, Helpwr Heddiw. Children will try role-play through the medium of Welsh and write simple sentences pattern in Welsh.

Mathematical Development enables children to further their understanding of number, measurement, pattern, shape and space by providing a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk. These outcomes cover important aspects of mathematical understanding and provide the foundation for Numeracy.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World is the area of learning concerned with historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning. Children begin to solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan and question,

in a variety of contexts; to discover and explore their environment, and people and places that have significance in their lives.

Physical Development in the Foundation Phase is about improving skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. It helps children gain better control and co-ordination as they move safely, confidently and imaginatively, and helps them learn how to handle objects, tools and construction materials safely and with control.

Physical development has two very important aspects; it helps children become confident in what they can do and enables them to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active.

Creative Development is the area of learning concerned with music, creative movement, drama, art, craft and design technology.

PLANNING

At BHVC planning is based on the Foundation Phase Framework and the Seven Areas of Learning. These complement each other and work together to provide a cross-curricular approach to form a practical relevant curriculum. They are not to be approached in isolation. Rather, emphasis is placed on developing children's skills across the Areas of Learning, to provide a suitable and integrated approach for young children's learning.

Class teachers meet to plan the weekly activities and skills to be developed. In the Foundation Phase, effective planning involves a balance between continuous, enhanced and focused provision.

KEY SKILLS

In BHVC, learners will acquire, develop, practise, apply and refine their skills through group and individual tasks in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. Progression in tasks moves from the concrete to the more abstract, from simple to complex, from personal to the bigger picture, from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Staff will refer to the Numeracy and Literacy Frameworks, as well as the Digital Competency Framework when planning, to ensure Key Skills are taught across the curriculum.

CURRICULUM CYMRAEG

Learners will appreciate the different languages, images, objects, sounds and tastes that are integral in Wales today and gain a sense of belonging to Wales, and understand the Welsh heritage, literature and arts, as well as the language.

Learners' Welsh language skills should be progressively developed throughout the Foundation Phase by implementing the Welsh Language Development Area of Learning.

PSE AND WELLBEING

Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity is at the heart of the Foundation Phase and children's skills are developed across all Areas of Learning through participation in experiential learning activities, indoors and outdoors. Children learn about themselves, their relationships with other children and adults both within and beyond the family. They are encouraged to develop their self-esteem, their personal beliefs and moral values. They develop an understanding that others have differing needs, abilities, beliefs and views. The Foundation Phase supports the cultural identity of all children, to celebrate different cultures and help children recognise and gain a positive awareness of their own and other cultures. Positive attitudes should be developed to enable children to become increasingly aware of, and appreciate the value of, the diversity of cultures and languages that exist in a multicultural Wales. They should become increasingly aware of the traditions and celebrations that are important aspects of the cultures within Wales.

Motivation and commitment to learning is encouraged, as children begin to understand their own potential and capabilities. Children are supported in becoming confident, competent and independent thinkers and learners. They develop an awareness of their environment and learn about the diversity of people who live and work there. Positive attitudes for enjoying and caring for their environment are fostered. As their self-identity develops, children begin to express their feelings and to empathise with others. They experience challenges that extend their learning.

METHODOLOGY

At BHVC we believe that educational provision for young children should be holistic with the child at the heart of any planned curriculum. Teachers need to understand, inspire and challenge children's potential for learning. Teacher involvement in children's play is of vital importance, particularly when interactions involve open questioning, shared and sustained thinking.

There must be a balance between structured learning through teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Children are given opportunities to be creatively involved in their own learning which must build on what they already know and can do, their interests and what they understand. Active learning enhances and extends development.

Within any one class, children are given the opportunity to work as a class, individually and in a group. The learning activity and the resources being used influence how the class is organised.

PLAY

For children, play is a very serious business. It needs concentrated attention. It is about children learning through perseverance, attention to detail, and concentration – characteristics usually associated with work. Play is not only crucial to the way children become self-aware and the way in which they learn the rules of social behaviour, it is also fundamental to intellectual development. Prior learning is acknowledged and children are offered choices and challenges which encourage them and move their learning along.

Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively, both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

USE OF INTERNET

When the Internet is being used, then the School's E-safety Policy will always be strictly adhered to. In addition, all pupils will have signed an Acceptable Use form with their parents.

OUTDOOR LEARNING

The Foundation Phase (FP) places great importance on using the outdoor learning environment. Regular Forest School activities are on offer each fortnight for FP pupils. There are many reasons for encouraging the children to engage in the outdoors such as:

- Children's health and fitness benefit from running, jumping and skipping outside and using toys and equipment that cannot be used inside.
- Children can experience nature at first hand – how the weather changes and how plants and animals react to the different seasons.
- Problem solving can relate to real experiences.
- Children can experience aspects such as conservation and sustainability at first hand.
- Children can develop a love of nature.

CONTINUOUS AND ENHANCED PROVISION

Continuous provision refers to the different learning areas provided for pupils on a daily basis although the activities offered within the areas might change. Within these areas, pupils have the opportunity to choose and select resources which are labelled and accessible. Pupils are encouraged to clear away resources after using them. The adult role within the areas of continuous provision is to model appropriate play and language, to engage in activities where appropriate, to promote independence in the use of resources, to observe and assess.

Enhanced Provision refers to elements that are added to the continuous provision to enhance learning and skill development, to encourage investigation, to set challenges and to provide rehearsal opportunities.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Some activities, particularly those outdoors, are subject to risk assessments to ensure the Health and Safety of our pupils. However, we encourage children to take calculated risks, eg climbing onto apparatus, jumping, cutting vegetables and digging the gardens, as these develop pupils' fine and cross motor skills and equip them with skills required for lifelong learning. Staff are aware of pupils with allergies and adopt activities accordingly, ensuring pupils' equality of opportunity, eg cooking, tasting, textile collages.

If staff are taking children offsite a Risk Assessment must be undertaken and approved by the visits coordinator and Head Teacher via 'Evolve.' Such 'visits' are also subject to LEA guidelines and approval.

The adventure play equipment in the atrium is subject to regular checks. It is the responsibility of all staff to report any defects as soon as they are detected.

Classroom equipment should be well monitored and in good working order. The school promotes healthy eating through the free breakfast club, snack, curriculum activities and school dinners.

ASSESSMENT & REPORTING

Observing children: 'By observing children carefully to note their progress, involvement and enjoyment, as well as focusing on the attainment of predetermined outcomes, practitioners should be able to plan a more appropriate curriculum that supports children's development according to individual needs.' *WAG Foundation Phase Document 2008 - Observing Children.*

Teachers assess children's attainments by observing them in a range of contexts. These observations are then written in the 'Evaluation' section of their weekly planning, as well as on skills slips in the pupil's books. Teachers also regularly assess children using INCERTS. This enables the teacher to make a regular assessment of progress for each child, which is then reported to parents at half termly consultations.

Year 2 children are assessed in the summer term using the WAG National reading and numeracy tests.

These assessments (together with careful, continual and consistent monitoring by the teachers throughout the school year), enable early intervention in any special needs that might occur.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors:	Will review the policy as and when required and should have an understanding of the policy when conducting their link governor role.
Head Teacher:	Will ensure the policy is adhered to and monitor and review.
Teachers:	Should ensure they understand the policy. Any comments about the policy should be shared during the review process.
Pupils:	Should be taught, where appropriate, how they can follow the policy and its practices.
Parent Partnerships:	This policy will be shared with parents via the school website and may be discussed during parent consultations.
Planning:	All staff should ensure that the policy is taught to pupils, where appropriate, and adhered to in their everyday work.

Teaching: All staff are responsible for the implementation and teaching of the expectations within the policy.

Organisation: The Foundation Phase Policy is organised for The Foundation Phase and the teaching and learning of pupils aged 3-7.

Resources: Resources that affect the implementation of the policy should be reported to the stock controller in the school office. Staff should ensure that resources are in plentiful supply and that the development of skills within the Foundation Phase are not affected due to resource issues.

Equal Opportunities
All teaching and non-teaching staff at BHVC will ensure that all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social circumstances, have access to the whole curriculum and opportunities to make the greatest progress possible in all areas of the Foundation Phase.

Staff will ensure that all children feel secure, included and valued. No child should feel excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture, home language, family background, special needs, disability, gender or ability. The Foundation Phase is accessible to all children, whatever their ability. Teachers provide learning opportunities that are matched to the needs of children with specific needs, and take into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

We aim to meet the needs of all our children through planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests and that develop their self-esteem and confidence. We use a variety of teaching strategies and provide opportunities to motivate and support children and help them to learn effectively. We recognise the importance of offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is encouraged and valued.

ALN
See Policy on Additional Learning Needs. At BHVC we aim to provide a happy, stimulating and secure environment for all children, where individual abilities are recognised. All children are given the opportunity to develop skills to the very best of their ability.

We believe in early intervention and provide equipment, resources and learning activities to meet the individual needs of those children in the Foundation Phase who need additional support or who have particular needs or disabilities. Our ALNCO, together with staff at BHVC, work with parents to identify learning needs, to respond quickly to any area of difficulty and to formulate an effective strategy to meet these needs, so that later difficulties can be avoided.

Monitoring and Review
This policy is a working document and is open to regular review by the Co-ordinator. Any suggested amendments arising from this policy will be presented to Governors for discussion at their first meeting following this review.

Observations and Discussions
The Foundation Phase Co-ordinator may carry out observations as part of the monitoring process and may provide oral and written feedback. A particular focus may be specified at times for observations. Discussions may also be carried out with teaching staff, learning support staff and pupils.

Any failure to follow this policy should be immediately reported to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

Consultation: This policy has been created by C Crew, in consultation with staff and the Head Teacher.