



Making the difference

Curriculum Policy: Early Years Foundation Stage



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum Policy

Audience

This policy is intended for all teaching staff and staff with classroom responsibilities, the School Governors, parents, inspection teams and LA/other Advisory Body Advisers/Inspectors.

This policy document, after presentation to, and agreement by, the staff and Governing Body, is available to all teaching and non-teaching staff and the School Governors. Copies of policy documents are kept, in the Boardroom and electronic copies on the intranet in the Hub. They are also available to view on the Vbranch House website. Such distribution ensures the accessibility of the document to visiting teachers and to parents. Extra copies are available from the Head Teacher.

Pupils at Vbranch House

All the pupils at Vbranch House have a physical or movement difficulty and many have communication difficulties, visual perceptual difficulties and other related difficulties. A small percentage of pupils also attend mainstream schools for part of the week. The majority of the pupils have learning difficulties associated with their physical difficulties and need modifications to the curriculum. Many of the pupils are working below the standard required to pass the national curriculum tests. As well as modifying the curriculum many different learning strategies are used to enable the pupils to access the curriculum. At Vbranch House we call this 'access learning'. Strategies include the use of communication books, boards and voice output communication aids; Makaton signing; powered mobility; adapted computer access using switches, touchscreens and eye gaze, roller/tracker balls; multisensory presentation of materials and adult facilitation through trained teaching assistants.

By the age of 5 many pupils have already learnt a majority of life skills. Taking steps, early speech and self-care skills are usually developing. Vbranch House recognises that the pupils who attend this setting may have some delay with these early learning skills. It is for this reason that the multi-disciplinary team from Vbranch House work in partnership with the parents/guardians of each pupil to provide a framework of care and learning in which they can develop independent self-care skills to the best of their ability.

In the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the seven areas of learning there is a very strong emphasis on social and self-care skills. Our pupils, with the specific needs that they have, need extra guidance at an early age. The Vbranch Individual Education and Wellbeing (VIEW) Curriculum encompasses the intended developmental outcomes of the EYFS and, at regular intervals, teachers review pupil progress from their My Goals against the EYFS age-related development stages. See also the Vbranch House 'Curriculum Policy' for how the VIEW Curriculum meets the EYFS seven areas of learning.

The EYFS sets national standards to ensure that the pupils learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. As per the VIEW Curriculum, the EYFS promotes teaching and learning that gives pupils the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school life.



The whole-school VIEW Curriculum sets a new topic plan each term that supports the seven areas of learning. The My Goals for each pupil will address VIEW and EYFS goals and continue to assist pupils:

- ◆ develop independence to the best of their ability.
- ◆ develop personal, social and emotional skills by providing an environment in which he/she can gain skills by positive role models.
- ◆ develop early learning skills to help deal with day-to-day challenges.
- ◆ gain skills to communicate their needs, feelings and experiences through speaking (verbally or with a VOCA), signing, symbols or gestures.
- ◆ to feel valued as an individual and to develop a positive self image.
- ◆ to experience personal achievement and appreciate the achievement of others.
- ◆ to be given access to a fun and stimulating environment.
- ◆ develop the inquisitive mind and promote thought process.
- ◆ enjoy learning through play.
- ◆ to be given opportunities to make their own choices.
- ◆ to learn the concept of basic rules and instructions.
- ◆ to learn attention skills by listening to others.
- ◆ to have an awareness of the culture and beliefs of others.
- ◆ to promote inclusion into a mainstream setting and to ease the process of transition.

Parental Involvement

At Vbranch House, we acknowledge the significant influence that parents on their have on their child and the major part they play in their early education.

We build a firm partnership with parents so that together we can enhance the development and well-being of their child. We involve parents by keeping them informed through our daily observations in the home - school diary. Parents are encouraged to use the diary to record any milestones noticed at home.

We value the opinions of the parents. We have an 'open house' policy so parents are welcome to school to discuss their child's progress.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Seven areas of learning are: -

Prime Areas:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Communication and Language
Physical Development

Specific Areas:

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design



Learning objectives for these curriculum areas are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This is the backbone of all the curriculum areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Early learning is based upon social environment and the opportunities and experiences we provide to each young individual. Learning is based on making relationships, self confidence and self awareness and managing feelings and behaviour.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development helps each pupil become as independent as possible and will boost confidence to enable them to form good relationships with other pupils and adults within their environment.

Pupils will learn social skills and will begin to work as part of a group as well as independently. Pupils at Vbranch House are made to feel valued and emphasis is always put on what they can do and not what they cannot do. Each pupil will gain self-esteem and be proud of their achievements. They have opportunities to express their ideas and feelings, learn to take turns and learn to show respect to those around them.

Pupils will have some awareness of various cultures and world celebrations.

An important part of the Personal, Social and Emotional Development is the inclusion process into mainstream education.

Communication and Language

Pupils have opportunities to listen and respond to stories, rhymes, poems, songs and music. They have opportunities to create their own stories, which promotes development of their imaginative skills. They learn that words carry meaning and begin to become familiar with their names and early key words.

Books are available to each pupil to share in a group setting or on a 1:1 basis. Pupils learn to enjoy books and communicate their thoughts on shared stories. Each pupil is given a Vbranch House book bag to encourage borrowing a book from school. This enables each pupil to learn the concept of respecting the property of others.

Each pupil begins to communicate meaning by developing speech, writing, using symbols, signs and gestures.

Physical Development

Physical Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage is about improving skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. It enables pupils to have a better understanding of how the body works and what they need to do to be a healthy and safe individual. Self care and self help skills such as personal hygiene, dressing and feeding is focussed on in this area.

We support pupils to build a positive self-image and to develop self-confidence, making them aware of their achievements and valuing themselves as important individuals. Pupils are involved in a variety of activities to promote physical development such as individual and group physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and PE groups.



Literacy

This focuses on pupils learning the skills for reading and writing. Depending on the pupil, they may follow the 'Letters and Sounds' phonics programme or are learning to read symbols or understanding Objects of Reference. Support is offered by the Occupational Therapist to help pupils with their development of fine motor and handwriting skills. Handwriting plans are written to enable all staff working with each pupil to follow a consistent approach. All pupils are encouraged to mark make initially before methods of recording such as ICT or a scribe are introduced.

Mathematics

This area of learning includes counting, sorting and matching and enables pupils to further their understanding of number, measurements, pattern, shape and space.

Mathematical understanding is developed through stories, songs, games and imaginative play. Learning through play is an important factor in the early years and this is focussed on very much when learning mathematical skills, like number games and counting songs. Water play and cooking activities are also offered for the development of mathematical skills, giving pupils a practical insight into weights, measures and capacity.

Understanding of the World

This area of learning focuses on pupils developing knowledge, skills and understanding to help them make sense of the world, people and communities and technology.

Pupils have opportunities to solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan and question. They are able to explore and make discoveries about their environment, people and places.

Information and Communication Technology is used in a variety of forms. The pupils have access to computers with a variety of software to suit individual needs and interest. Each class has access to an iPad with a variety of suitable apps to develop ICT and Fine Motor skills. Cameras are available for the pupils to take photographs and record information. Communication aids such as Big Macks and other augmentative aids are also used on an individual basis and in group settings such as story time. We value the outdoor environment and acknowledge the importance of giving each pupil the opportunity to explore the wider environment e.g. sensory gardens, termly educational school trips.

This area forms the foundation for later work in science, design and technology, history, geography and information and communication technology (ICT).

Expressive Arts and Design

This area of learning includes art, music, dance, role-play and imaginative play. Creative Development encourages pupils to express their feelings in a personal and individual way. It is important to be able to express their imagination, whether it is through drawing, painting, movement or any other creative activity.



Assessment of the Early Years

During the Early Years Foundation Stage, the pupils are assessed through observations carried out by all members of staff involved with the pupils. This allows for a holistic view of the pupil and accurate assessment. The observations are reviewed and evaluated by the class teacher. Any data completed are shared with parents and the pupil's mainstream setting. See also the Vbranch House 'Assessment & Record Keeping Policy'.

Further Information

Useful Documents and Resources

DfES/QCA	The National Curriculum Handbook for Primary Teachers 2000
DFE	Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012
Standards and Testing Agency	Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (EYFS) 2014
Standards and Testing Agency	EYFS Profile (Handbook) 2014
QCA	Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties, Guidelines
Revised January 2017 Review 2020	