



Bedford  
Nursery Schools  
Federation

# Curriculum Policy

Written August 2021

Reviewed January 2022, December 2022 Julie Smith, Victoria Rempel, Suzie Hoefkens; Anna  
Browning December 2025

Next Review: September 2026

## Rationale

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation our curriculum has been carefully designed to build on the social, cultural contexts of the children's home and family practices. We provide knowledge-rich, seasonal and cultural experiences which involve connecting with the child, the local community and beyond.

*"We provide a seasonal and cultural experience that involves looking within the child and outside the window to the local community and beyond. We enable all children to be resilient and intrinsically motivated to independently satisfy their curiosity every day."*

By maintaining a focus on aspirational outcomes for every child, we ensure that our curriculum meets the needs of all the children. To achieve this, we offer a safe, secure environment that is rich and stimulating, and encourages children to develop autonomy, individuality and become enthusiastic learners. The curriculum is inclusive of all children and any barriers to learning are quickly identified, to enable each child to reach their full potential.

**Intent** - What do we intend children to learn?

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation, we believe that children bring a broad range of experiences (cultural capital) to nursery school from diverse sources in their lives, not limited to but including:

- children's interests
- multi-generational family interests
- family cultures
- social interactions
- multi-lingual communication
- experiences of abilities and disabilities
- different family make-up
- cultural and ethnic backgrounds

Children use this everyday knowledge to co-construct meaning in their play across home and school contexts and this can influence their social interactions and choices with their peers.

The intent of the curriculum is to broaden the horizons and life experiences of children, as well as build on their interests. The curriculum is therefore underpinned by hands-on, meaningful experiences which will embed and provide a constant flow from:

- the local to the global
- first-hand learning to application
- the unknown to new knowledge
- the familiar to the unfamiliar

To achieve this, nursery practitioners:

- Are individually responsive to children.
- Are collectively responsive to the families who form our community.
- Observe children and engage with their parents and carers in order to build a picture of current interests, what the children can do and what they need support with.
- Support children to develop their characteristics of effective learning.
- Collaborate with children to discover which teaching and learning strategies are effective and how to maintain attention to reach a particular goal.
- Enable children to be co-constructors through the provision of continued and sustained access to different play. This sees interests being prolonged over time, nurtured and enhanced, and skills and knowledge being consolidated and embedded.
- Use individualised strategies to develop children's language depending on the child's needs. These include sustaining a dialogue, responding to questions, providing narrative commentary, offering bilingual support, allowing sufficient processing and response times.

## Planning

Curriculum planning is therefore dynamic and responsive as well as anticipatory. Planning takes account of the experiences of all children across the nursery schools, including children in vulnerable groups. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, practitioners consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant agencies where appropriate (refer to Inclusion Policy).

Our curriculum is underpinned by the Educational Programmes from the EYFS for prime and specific areas of learning and development alongside the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Leuven scales are used to measure children's wellbeing and involvement <sup>(1)</sup> which supports the planning of appropriate learning and developmental experiences based on children's individual interests and needs.

The Early Childhood Environmental Rating scale <sup>(2)</sup> is used as a tool to ensure high quality environmental provision and adult-child interactions.

Long term planning:

- Our curricular intentions provide a clear picture of what children will experience and learn across the year through continuous provision.

Medium term planning:

- Details our intent over the term.
- Includes relevant seasonal and cultural experiences.
- Is flexible and responsive to the needs and interests of the children.

Short term planning:

- Moment-by-moment observations see staff sensitively scaffold or extend children's learning as children explore, react and respond to stimuli.
- Daily planning and evaluation meetings are highly responsive to children's current interests and fascinations.
- Weekly plans for adult-initiated group-time activities are informed by the medium-term plan and are adapted to reflect children's current interests. Activities are further adjusted to provide appropriate scaffolding or extension for individual learners.
- Communication and language development is supported by introducing targeted vocabulary through real-life experiences, visual aids, videos, and a range of sensory opportunities.

## **Implementation**

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation, we know that children learn best through interacting with the world around them, exploring and participating in engaging and challenging activities, and when their levels of wellbeing and involvement are high.

The structure of the nursery day offers extended free-flow play during each morning and afternoon session, carefully balanced by a more structured adult-led 'group time'.

To ensure that children make progress in all seven areas of learning practitioners:

- Reflectively plan the environment for children to pursue their own interests, including independently accessible resources in areas which are clearly defined.
- Provide resources for open-ended play.
- Following on-going professional dialogue and discussions at the daily evaluation meetings, plan for progress in complexity and challenge in children's play.
- Add provocations to the environment which will deepen children's knowledge.
- Support children to help overcome challenges and build resilience.
- Offer children sensitive and engaging experiences that promote curiosity and creativity and encourage exploration and investigation.
- Organise the environment in a way that enables session-time activities to be led or structured by either children or adults.
- Support in-the-moment learning opportunities stemming from child-initiated interests and sensitively address any misconceptions.
- Offer planned group times which allow for periods of joint attention based on adult-initiated activities, designed to develop skills and knowledge in all seven areas of learning.
- Give specific feedback to children in order to scaffold or extend their learning and independence, helping the children to become more powerful learners.
- Ensure that the curriculum builds on prior learning and is carefully sequenced.

Our Curricular intentions provide an overview of what we would like children to know and be able to do before they move on to their next phase of learning (see Appendix 1). These are:

- 1: To be settled at nursery and become a confident learner
- 2: To lay the foundations to become a confident communicator
- 3: To attend to their own self-care needs and understand healthy living
- 4: To lay the foundations to become confident reader
- 5: To lay the foundations to become a confident writer.
- 6: To take care of their environment and begin to understand changes
- 7: To understand that they are part of a diverse community within Bedford, England
- 8: To develop number sense
- 9: To develop a sense of space
- 10: To develop skills and processes for self-expression, creating with a purpose in mind

Our Curriculum page on the website details how the Curricular Intentions are mapped against the seven areas of learning of the EYFS

Staff scaffold and support learning to ensure children access the curriculum and make progress through it. Where children can readily access the 'progression milestones', the emphasis is on deepening their learning. However, the range of activities on offer is not limited to this overview, and responses to the children's interests and fascinations are prioritised.

Children benefit from a range of specialist-led sessions that broaden their experiences and enrich the curriculum. Opportunities such as Forest School, music lessons, and visits from storytellers provide children with high-quality, immersive learning that supports their holistic development and nurtures curiosity, confidence, and creativity.

Children who start their Reception Year with us will be closely supported by their key person on a bespoke basis to deepen their learning through the ambitious curriculum, providing challenge and extending their learning at an appropriate level. Their learning will include daily phonics and maths sessions with appropriate challenge added to group time sessions. The potential trajectory of their progress can be seen in Appendix 2. Assessment will incorporate the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) at the beginning of the Reception year and will be against the Development Matters statements for Reception children at the end of the Autumn and Spring terms. Reception children are then assessed against the statutory Early Learning Goals during the Summer Term. (See Appendix 3).

### **Impact** – How we know what children have learnt

- Key worker knowledge of the children and ongoing dialogue with parents ensures that we have a holistic knowledge of the children's learning which feeds back into the planning.
- Children's progress and attainment are assessed and monitored in consultation with parents during the settling-in period. This is followed by termly best-fit practitioner judgements in consultation with parents.
- Through on-going observations, practitioners assess, reflect and evaluate, feeding back into the dynamic cycle of planning.

- Children requiring any additional support are identified and a provision map is used to ensure that appropriate support is provided.
- Learning journals provide an example of children's progress over time and include child, parent and practitioner voice.
- The intentionality of the continuous provision and the structured group-time routine enables children to revisit their skills and interests, over-learn and commit new knowledge to their long-term memory.
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities have individualised education plans incorporating key person and family knowledge as well as advice from outside agencies; these are kept under review to ensure they continue to meet their needs.
- Systematic observations on well-being and involvement are included in the feedback and planning cycle.
- Leaders monitor the provision, including adult-child interactions, through learning walks, observations and evaluation of daily, weekly and termly planning.
- Displays reflect opportunities to consolidate, share and extend learning.

(1) Well-being Scales (Laevers 1997, 2005)

(2) ECERS 3 (Harms, Clifford, Cryer, 2015)

(3) ITERS 3 (Harms, Clifford, Cryer, Yazejian, 2017)

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