



Early Years Foundation Stage Outdoor Play Policy

Berkeley Primary School

Policy agreed	November 2024
Review date	November 2028
Author	Helen Earl



INTRODUCTION

At Berkeley Primary School, we have large outdoor play areas that are directly accessible from both the Nursery and the Reception Units. We are therefore able to offer outdoor play and learning as part of the children's continuous provision for large amounts of the time that children spend in school. We see the outdoor space as an extension of our indoor space. We recognise the unique possibilities offered by "the outdoors" and use it to promote extend, and consolidate "indoor learning", but also to provide learning opportunities that cannot be replicated inside.

Children learn in different ways. The space offered by "the outdoors" offers valuable opportunities for children who particularly learn through being active to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes conducive to life-long learning.

Children learn best when they are happy and feel secure. Some children are more secure in the outdoors than they are inside. Being outside can offer these children valuable opportunities to build relationships with adults and other children, which they may otherwise find challenging.

Fresh air, oxygen, light and exercise work to stimulate children's brains. Harnessing and embracing "the outside" as part of our everyday routine enables children to be more ready to learn when it is time for adult led focussed tasks and whole class indoor teaching.

Being physical and active outside can help children to develop muscles and skills needed for later learning. For example, spinning around helps children to develop the sense of balance (vestibular system) needed for the left to right tracking that is an essential element of reading. Crawling helps children to develop the muscles in their shoulders and wrists that are essential for writing. Being outside also allows learning to take place on a much bigger scale, supporting children who may be having difficulties in learning in more traditional ways.

All seven areas of learning can be supported and developed through being outside and at Berkeley Primary School, we work to achieve this. The following is a list of just some of the ways we use the outdoor areas to support learning and development.

Communication and language

- Providing quiet areas where children can talk to one another and to staff
- Providing materials (such as construction crates and den making resources) that encourage children to listen to one another's ideas and to express their ideas to others.
- Planning adult led activities that support children in listening to and following instructions (for example to sow seeds, or to care for plants).

Physical development

- Providing resources that allow children to learn and develop skills such as throwing and catching, rolling, sending and receiving
- Providing resources that allow children to develop confidence in moving and travelling (for example balancing equipment or crates)
- Giving the opportunity for children to exercise and to be healthy.
- Planning adult led activities that teach and extend specific skills.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Encouraging children to develop friendships with children who may not be in their own class



- Allowing children who excel at the more physical activities to show what they can do, to feel successful and proud of themselves
- Understanding and following games with rules (both of their own invention and of adult-led)

Literacy

- Allowing children to develop the muscle control and other skills necessary as building blocks for reading and writing
- Using the space for large scale mark making and writing opportunities (e.g. with chalks)
- Using the space for role-play and re-enactment of stories read (child initiated and adult led).

Mathematics

- Using the space for large scale games or activities (e.g. number hunts or addition activities)
- Providing resources that develop the use of mathematical language (for example water play resources that can be used to develop understanding of capacity)

Understanding the world

- Growing and looking after plants
- Observing changes over time (e.g. the seasons)
- Noticing the effects of the weather

Expressive arts and design

- Giving opportunities to explore with large scale art materials (e.g. chalks on the floor)
- Providing open ended resources that can be used imaginatively in a variety of ways (e.g. construction crates) to support role-play

The EYFS states that providers must take steps to keep children safe and well. We apply this requirement to our outdoor areas as well as to our indoor space. To this end:

- At least one member of staff who holds a current paediatric first aid certificate is on premises at all times when children are present. First aid resources are easily accessible in medical cabinets / cupboards and injuries are treated and logged.
- Children with individual physical needs or medical problems are identified and known to staff. If necessary, these children have individual health care plans and / or risk assessments in place that support their access to the outdoor spaces.
- Adults are timetabled to be outside with the children. The outside area is never open if staff are not outside (children are never outside unsupervised).
- Water and / or milk and snack are available inside as part of the continuous provision. Staff are vigilant and send children to get a drink if they appear to be hot or if they have been doing a lot of exercise.
- When setting up / unpacking and tidying up resources, staff check that they are still fit for purpose. Any broken resources are removed from children's use, reported, repaired and / or disposed of as necessary.
- Gates are closed and locked before children enter the outside area and staff visually check that fences and other large structures (for example the balancing equipment or the benches) are in good repair. Any problems are reported. If there is a problem with gates, fences or other structures within the outside area that could cause hazards or injury, the outside areas are closed until repairs are organised and the areas are made safe.



Berkeley Primary School EYFS Outdoor Play Policy



- The outside areas are regularly swept by caretaking staff in order to ensure that the floor surface is not slippery and is kept safe.
- In the event of a fire alarm, staff close the door into the cloakrooms and evacuate children from the playgrounds through the gates, to the appointed safe place. They do not allow children or staff to enter the building. Children re-unite with their classmates once they are at the appointed safe place.
- Weather conditions are monitored and the outdoor areas are opened or closed accordingly. The school has purchased large numbers of waterproof coats and trousers, so in light rain children can still access outside. However, if heavy rain makes the floor too slippery, for example, then the outside areas will be closed. Other conditions which may mean closure of outside are: strong winds, ice, extreme cold, or extreme heat.
- Risk assessments for particular resources are written, reviewed and shared with all staff (for example, the construction crates).