



“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to reach their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

## **1. The nature of Early Years Education for young children with learning disabilities.**

In our school Early Years education refers to pupils under the age of 5 as well as pupils over 5 who receive our Spring Stepping Stones curriculum. We recognise that our pupils, due to their needs, benefit with having time to consolidate their learning. Therefore, the provisions of broad areas of learning have an important place in the curriculum of young children with S.L.D and P.M.L.D. Each pupil is viewed as an individual with specific needs being met in appropriate ways and with individuality being encouraged.

Our Spring Stepping Stones curriculum is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### **A Unique Child**

At Boston Endeavour Academy we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

At our school we endeavour to provide the young child with learning disabilities with:

- A safe learning environment
- Activities to stimulate their senses and encourage physical exploration
- Time to practice their developing skills
- Adults who help them to develop their self-esteem, sense of identity and self-worth
- Opportunities and support to develop communication. All forms of communication are valued in our school and in our class environment including PECS, Makaton signing, symbols, gestures and the use of communication aids as well as speech and writing.
- Encouragement to develop personal skills e.g. toileting, feeding and washing.

- Opportunities to undertake programmes set by other professionals such as physiotherapy programmes.
- Opportunities to make choices and decisions
- Experiences to provide a foundation for future learning in a range of environments and situations e.g. visits in the local community, inclusion projects with mainstream peers etc. This may also include opportunities for skills, knowledge and learning to be practiced in other environments including home, through provision of 'homework' tasks in consultation with parents and carers
- Access to a multidisciplinary team (Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy) and on-going assessments of need.

### **Positive Relationships**

At Boston Endeavour Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

If the Boston Endeavour Academy Early Years/KS1 class within our Spring Wing is an appropriate placement parents will be advised by pre-school agencies to visit. All children will have a statement of Special Educational Needs before entry to class. However, in rare cases, where the child's needs clearly indicate they need to be placed within a school for pupils with severe or profound learning disabilities, we may be able to accept a child on an assessment place with permission from the LA.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are their child's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school and where possible carrying home visits
- The children having the opportunity to visit Boston Endeavour Academy and spend time with their teacher before starting school and accessing 'stay and play' sessions.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to hear and discuss their child's progress through Home School Diaries, phone calls and meetings;
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Parents being invited to an Annual Review Meeting which includes Annual Review Report, Parents Comments Form and Reports from members of our Multi-disciplinary team as appropriate to each child,;
- Providing space in the children's Home School Diary' booklets for parent to leave comments relating to the children's achievements.

### **Enabling Environments**

At Boston Endeavour Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development.

## **Our Planning**

- Our Intent is to use a thematic approach to learning. Each topic will enable pupil progression across the seven areas of learning. It is important that planning is tailored to the appropriate situations and relevant interventions, which provide opportunities for learning. Situations may arise spontaneously in children's play; it is the role of the adult to select an appropriate moment for intervention and to build on the immediate response of the child.
- This is implemented by planning sessions that take into account curriculum guidance from our Spring Stepping Stones curriculum. Our planning takes on a knowledge- rich approach, where children build on their deep subject knowledge. Where possible planning also refers to EHCP targets, programmes set by therapists and enables pupils to build on their competences and knowledge.
- The impact of this means we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in lesson and activities. We do this through a combination of whole class teaching, individual or group activities and child initiated time, in order to meet individual needs.

The planning for our Spring Stepping Stones Stage is carried out in three phases:

**EYFS Frame work linked in our Spring Stepping Stones Curriculum:** This is used as our long term planning and works of a 3 year rota. The framework has been designed to ensure coverage of the whole curriculum over the course of each academic year. The headings selected from each learning area provide a termly focus, and are not taught in isolation from other headings within the learning area.

**Medium term plans:** are completed by class teachers and class leads. The planning incorporates both spontaneous learning and teacher led sessions for each individual curriculum area. A large emphasis is placed on spontaneous learning and this is evident in the planning.

**Short term plans:** are provided by the class teacher and/or Teaching assistant as necessary. These include lesson plans for sessions which form part of the daily routine. Session plans are written for specialist sessions including individual pupil integration and multi-sensory impaired sessions etc.

## **Learning and Development**

**Play:** "Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development." Through learning to play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

**Active Learning:** “Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

**Creativity and Critical Thinking:** “When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

## **Curriculum**

At Boston Endeavour Academy our Spring Stepping Stones curriculum is split into three different pathways; Discovers, Explorers and Investigators. Children will be baselined and assessed against the curriculum so that they can access the most appropriate learning for them and progress sequentially.

We also focus on a knowledge rich curriculum. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

### **Communication and Language**

#### **Physical Development**

#### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

#### **Literacy**

#### **Mathematics**

#### **Understanding the World**

#### **Expressive Arts and Design**

When working with our youngest children and children with complex needs, we will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become to progress through the school.

## **Assessment for learning**

- The Spring wing teachers and support staff will assess pupils via observations called 'snap shots' as well as longer observations which will be carried out for each of the seven area every full term. Photographic/written evidence of children's work or observations made during sessions will be uploaded onto Evidence for learning.
- Parents have access to their child's Evidence for learning. This enables us to share and celebrate the individual achievements of each child. These photo records form part of the child's record of achievement.
- Staff will be working on pupils EHCP targets throughout the school day. We will be measuring progress using MAPP and this will be recording on evidence for learning.
- All our assessments will help inform staff on planning and how best progress children.

