

## Headteacher's Statement

Blagrove Nursery School is a popular and successful provision for children age 3 to 4 in the Tilehurst area of Reading. Children attend for both 15 hours over 2 ½ days or 30 hours for 5 days. The last 3 years has seen a lower than usual number of children on-roll due to an identified low birth rate in the local authority. The numbers both in the Nursery & on the waiting list are now increasing & this is leading to the Nursery being at full capacity. The number of children now attending for 30 hours is increasing with equal demand for 15-hour places.

The Nursery community has been proactive at raising the profile of the Nursery, including attending local events & developing a new website & social media presence over the last year, in order to increase the number of children on-roll. The Nursery is often recommended by parents past & present to other parents who are looking for a Nursery place, both by word of mouth & on local area groups.

The Nursery Community & intake is changing with an increasing number of children who have EAL & those who identify as BAME, along with a higher number of children who receive EYPP. There is no particular ethnic group that has a significant number of children in it, instead there is a wide range of different ethnicities & languages spoken within the Nursery.

The impact on the children of the Covid-19 pandemic is still evident, but gradually declining, with the children needing additional support with speech, language & communication; social skills & peer to peer interactions in particular. Staff have adapted the curriculum to consider these needs & the widely differing early years experiences that cohort of children continue to have experienced.

The staff have now developed a curriculum map which they have been working with from the summer term 2022. This document sets out how curriculum coverage takes place across an academic year, including what the staff will be teaching the children & the “On Track” assessment indicators that staff use to inform their assessment of the children at 4 points across the year. Staff are becoming skilled at using the curriculum map to inform their planning intent & evaluations following delivery of the curriculum. The staff use the “On Track” indicators to inform future planning needs for different groups of children, as well as individuals. In September 2023 staff revised the document to make it more reflective of the fact that children often attend the Nursery for more than 1 academic year. Rather than the curriculum being structured on a yearly basis it is now identified as a Learning Pathway, with children working at a variety of stages throughout the year, being assessed against the relevant checkpoints on their pathway.

The nursery prides itself on nurturing every individual child to achieve the highest standard of education and welfare. Children are supported to develop their own unique skills at a pace and level appropriate to their stage of development. We work closely with our families and build strong relationships with them in order to support their child's learning and development and further parent's understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and how they can support their child at home.

The Nursery has an increasingly strong emphasis on children's well-being & getting this right before moving onto more detailed & challenging learning. Children have daily access to a quiet time where they are supported to join in with yoga, meditation or story massage. Children are taught to identify, recognise & acknowledge their feelings, enabling them to have strong self-regulation skills; developing a range of strategies to manage their emotions, ably supported by the adults in the setting.

Children are supported to become interested, excited, motivated and independent learners. We know that children perform at their highest level when fully absorbed in activities that interest them. We provide access to well thought out and clearly labelled continuous provision resources that are always available for children to use to develop their individual learning. This is supported through a variety of

stimulating enhancement activities working from the children's interests and events that recognise the diversity within our Nursery community- these enable children to extend their learning and natural curiosity by giving them new experiences. During child-initiated play children are ably supported by experienced staff to extend and build on their learning- carrying out activities together and being challenged to move their thinking forward. This is balanced with well-planned adult-led activities where the children learn with adults and other children in a more structured way. The children are then able to access these resources in order to use and apply the skills they have been taught, independently. Whenever possible learning takes place indoors, outdoors & on trips away from the Nursery site in the local area.

Children from all groups and diverse backgrounds achieve well, making excellent and accelerated progress during their time at nursery. The behaviour of children is managed well by the staff and is consequently very good.

We see parents and carers as partners with us in developing their child's learning and they are actively encouraged to become a part of the life of the nursery. We expect them to bring their children regularly and on time and inform the nursery if they are absent for any reason. Parents are able to join in with their child's learning through a variety of events: each term a "Family Learning Day" is hosted where parents and carers can come in to the nursery and spend a session working together on a variety of activities in the nursery with their child and finding out how they link into the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Each key person builds a strong relationship with the families in their care, which starts at Welcome Groups and home visits prior to children starting with us, and share information about their child through their learning journey, reports and more informal discussions. We are proud of the strong, positive feelings for the nursery that parents express in their feedback to the events that are held across the year.

The nursery leadership team is supported by the Co-Chairs of Governors. The governing body is currently going through a time of re-generation as new governors join and existing governors take on new responsibilities. The supportive nature of the group is a positive factor in ensuring that people are supported to discharge the duties of their new roles effectively.

The staff team is made up of full and part-time practitioners with a variety of qualifications and experience. The Nursery believes very strongly in staff development & is supportive of staff training to upskill themselves- nearly all staff in post have been supported by the Nursery to gain appropriate qualifications that enable them to take on their role such as NVQ 2 & 3 qualifications or a teaching qualification. The Nursery has recently employed additional staff on either fixed term or casual contracts to address the increasing numbers of children on roll. Roles and responsibilities are clearly understood. The nursery's performance management reflects the expertise of the staff in recognising & challenging themselves & identifying their own learning needs. CPD is closely linked to the Nursery Key Priorities & areas for development identified during observations, learning walks & whole school needs, depending on different cohorts of children.