

Birkdale Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Updated 2023



BIRKDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

"Attainment through Caring, Challenge and Creativity"

Where caring and respect for others are the responsibility of all who belong here, so that we may grow to understand our individual uniqueness and learn to love and respect the world in which we live.

Where the potential within us all is encouraged to flourish without fear or prejudice, so that we may learn to become all that we are meant to be.

Where creativity has a pre-eminent place in the life and the work of the school, so that we may celebrate our own achievements and those of others.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage

Our Nursery and Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Development Matters 2020. As an Early Years Foundation Stage at Birkdale Primary School, we seek to provide:

- **quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- **a secure foundation** through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and /or carers
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

There are four guiding principles that shape our Early Years setting. These are:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is consistently learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates.

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

- the areas of **learning and development** which must shape the activities and experiences for all of our children in our Early Years setting

- the **early learning goals** that providers must help children work towards by the end of the Reception year
- **assessment arrangements** for measuring progress
- **safeguarding and welfare requirements** that staff must take to keep our children safe and promote their welfare.

Curriculum

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. These are made up of prime areas and specific areas. The prime areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These are the **prime areas**:

- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge that are strengthened by the prime areas. The **specific areas** are:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**

Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of our cohort of children. Our experienced teaching staff create a unique curriculum based on their observations of the children learning through child-initiated play and adult supported activities.

Assessment evidence and information from our parents and carers enables our practitioners to plan for our children's next steps of learning so that children are supported and guided through their own individual learning journey. We seek to maximise our curriculum through our wider curriculum providing children with the wealth and depth of learning experiences. We document our children's learning journey through display, our class floor books, work books and our children's voices.

Our Early Years teaching staff plan for and provide learning experiences with the characteristics of effective learning in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- **Playing and Exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching and Learning

We ensure there is a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities for our children to learn through. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the child's response to the adult builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually support, guide, model,

extend, listen to and question children as they learn. In some instances, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible. By the summer term in Reception, the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.

Our Nursery and Reception classes follow a timetable of planned session activities such as phonics, mathematics, literacy and PE. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class for sessions like quiet time, story time and circle time. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc... The amount of group and whole class sessions together are differentiated from Nursery to Reception.

We use various schemes of learning within our EYFS school curriculum; Charanga (music), GetSet4PE (PE), White Rose Maths (mathematics), Kapow (art and DT) and 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' in Early Years and Year 1 for the structured and systematic daily teaching of phonics.

Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for a story and our class 'Lending Library' extends and enhances reading opportunities at home, involving our parents and carers in their child's language and literacy development. Children in Nursery and Reception develop their literacy skills through our drawing club sessions where topic themed books and children's favourites are shared together to develop imagination, vocabulary and an enjoyment for reading and writing.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and topics are a great way to fire the imagination. The topics that we learn through are very much tailored to the children's interests and staff plan the children's curriculum within it. We also celebrate school and national events such as; Arts Week, Sport Relief, National Fitness Day, World Book Day, Maths Day and so many more. Staff are continuously looking to broaden the children's wider experiences of learning and life through activities such as a trip to the theatre, a walk to the local village, even a rescued hedgehog coming into school as the children learn about the season of Autumn. Long-term and medium-term planning give an overview of the key skills, knowledge and themes to be taught as well as daily incidental experiences that stem from the children's interests and experiences. Learning experiences are outlined in detail for parents and summarised in our class curriculum overviews which parents can view on our school website page.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take

an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play.

Assessment, Observations and Children's Work

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in the collation of their own work whether it's in books or topic folders which we then share with parents.

On entry to Nursery and Reception we carry out a baseline assessment for every child. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short practical assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts Reception. Alongside this, class teachers will carry out their own individual baseline assessment of every child through a combination of practical activities and observations of the children taking part in a range of activities. At the end of every term, children's progress is tracked against our observational checkpoints that are bespoke to our school Early Years curriculum. This provides an overview of the children's progress and the teaching and learning that must take place to ensure that children continue to make at least good progress. Children may have adapted learning and support to ensure that gaps in learning are narrowed. Our school SENCO supports the teaching staff in providing a curriculum for children with special educational needs. At the end of the Early Years, the term in which children reach the age of 5, class teachers will assess children against the Early Learning Goals (ELG's). Development within each ELG will be documented as an expected level of learning or working towards. At the end of the school year, all parents receive an end of year school reports which explains the progress their child has made throughout the school year. Reception reports include the ELG assessment results which state whether the child is 'working towards' or 'working at an expected level' at the end of the foundation stage.

Classroom Organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up quiet spaces for a maths game, reading and for construction. In Nursery, the outdoor area includes a garden area, music making, sandpit, covered areas and a climbing area which develop physical play alongside other curriculum areas. The Reception classes have two outdoor areas to promote the outdoor curriculum. Each child has their own labelled peg in both Nursery and Reception and named drawer in Reception. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes and book bag in their own personal space.

Role of Staff

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the Reception classes. In Nursery, there are key children assigned to each member of staff. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes. There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore we work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting.

At the start of the Nursery and Reception school year, parents are invited to an informal 'Welcome to Nursery/Reception Meeting'. This is an opportunity for the class teacher to explain the transition into the year group, to discuss our curriculum, routines and expectations for the school year. Following on from this meeting, parents are invited into school for a 'Stay and Play' session followed by a staggered entry start which may last anything up to two weeks, Reception may be slightly shorter. As parents, you will receive a school prospectus, A Welcome to Nursery/Reception booklet', a 'Curriculum Guide to the Early Years' and our Reception parents will be able to view online, our Reception 'End of Year Learning Expectations' guidance. Once the school year starts, you will have the opportunity to attend our Early Years phonics and maths information sessions. We constantly seek to provide opportunities to invite our family members into school. Previous events have included making Christmas crafts and snuggling down to share stories for World Book Day.

We always celebrate those special firsts such as learning to ride a bike without stabilizers or those first dry nights with our 'wow!' moments. We celebrate all achievements! We may also ask for your support in helping staff to make those assessment judgements if its something that we have not been able to observe in school.

We share our curriculum overview termly on our class website pages as well as letters home to inform parents of incidental learning experiences such a walk to the village to visit the library. Staff regularly update our twitter page @BirkdalePSEYFS as well as our class website pages with important information such as documents and curriculum information. In Reception, we use our school remote learning platform 'Google Classroom' to set our weekly phonics homework so that parents can support their child at home. Children take home a reading book home every week from our reading scheme 'Big Cat Collins' as well as a lending library book.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2021) and there is a section in our school Safeguarding Policy that directly refers to practice in the EYFS. It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. This is in line with the Birkdale Primary School Safeguarding Policy. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's portfolios, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit and milk from a Government scheme. All children in Reception eat a school lunch (free from September 2014) which is either a hot meal or a sandwich with a choice of a drink and pudding. The school meals are chosen from a 3-week menu cycle and are cooked on site in our school kitchen. All dietary requirements are

catered for. Children with food allergies are listed on the school medical list and in the classrooms.

We take all accidents seriously and always log any incidents. In the case of a serious injury, calls home are immediate or 999 in the case of a major incident. A number of teaching staff in the Early Years Department are paediatric first aid trained. All staff undertake annual training in the areas of asthma, diabetes and allergies.

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' and we have spare clothes. We ask parents to please return any borrowed items. Parents are asked to sign an intimate care form when their child starts in the Foundation stage to allow staff to see to their child's needs.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. There is an annual external check of equipment. We follow whole school procedures for Safeguarding (see separate policy). The Head teacher is one of our named staff for Safeguarding. We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.

Risk assessments are carried out by the teaching team if your child's class go on an educational visit. All risk assessments are kept in school.

Transition

We always ensure that the transition between Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year One is as seamless as possible. The Reception staff form positive relationships with the children in Nursery throughout the year so that they are familiar when they enter Reception. External links of communication are made with the children's key workers prior to the pre-school visit for those children who do not attend our school nursery. As part of our transition programme of activities, we organise visits for the children to their new class, arrange staff meetings to share information about cohorts and individuals, produce transition books for children who require additional support with change, introduce them to their new learning environment and new experiences e.g. playtime with Year One. The children take a display with them to their new classroom which helps them to settle in and give them ownership of their new classroom environment.