

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy – effective September 2021
Bourton on the Water Primary Academy

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 EYFS Framework.

Learning in the Early Years

Our Aims

Aims for the children in the Early Years

- For children to develop good relationships with their peers and adults.
- To make learning enjoyable and accessible to all children.
- To develop skills that will help children deal with the challenges of school and everyday life.
- To see every child as an individual and give them opportunities to develop his/her abilities.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.
- To deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that covers all areas of learning and encourages children to develop their own learning through school and life.
- To establish good and close relationships between home and school.

What is Early Years?

The Early Years refers to children under five years old in the foundation stage.

The Setting

There is a Reception Class/classes and 2 Pre-School classes on site. The Reception classes are staffed by 2 teachers and 1 full-time and 1 part-time teaching assistants with up to 45 pupils between both classes. The Pre-School Staff is led by a Leader and staffed with Support. The Early Years has its own block which is self-contained and has its own playground to the rear of the building. We are continually looking at ways to integrate the activities of the Pre-School and Reception classes.

Admission and Entry Arrangements

See Admissions policy.

Beginning School

- All parents are welcome to visit before applying for admissions through the Local Authority.
- A welcome evening is held in the summer term before admission. Information is given about school procedures as well as an insight into what their children will experience.
- Parents are introduced to teachers and TA's.
- A 'Welcome to Reception Class' booklet is given out explaining the procedures for the start of school, this includes dates, times, items to bring, etc.
- The children attend an induction afternoon ('stay and play' session) where they meet their teacher, T.A and class friends.
- Links between pre-schools/ playgroups and nurseries are in place. Teachers visit settings and are in contact with regards to transition records.
- Information on emergency contacts and medical conditions is collected for each child and is updated regularly.

After Admission

- Parents are invited to a Phonics and Reading meeting in Term 1
- Reception children are given Phonics "homework" while they are learning Set 1 sounds.
- All parents are encouraged to share books with their children at home
- Parents are invited to help with reading and school trips.

- Newsletters are circulated to parents regularly.
- Parent's evenings are held twice a year, but staff are always happy to listen to parents if they have any worries about their child.
- A copy of the Early Years Profile featuring an assessment against the Foundation Learning Goals is given to every parent including comments on how their child has settled and their general progress.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Children attend a number of introductory sessions to develop familiarity with the settings and practitioners. Our Reception staff also visit the local nurseries and pre-schools in return to familiarise themselves with the children in their own environment.

At the end of EYFS, our Reception teachers meet with the Year 1 teacher/teachers to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data and SPS grids are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class.

Daily Organisation

All Reception children attend school full time from the second full week of term. In the week before this a staggered start takes place.

School starts at 8.55am (9:00am for pre-school) and parents are encouraged to bring their child onto the school playground for the first few weeks. When they are settled they should be dropped off at the gate to make their way to class, thus developing independence.

All children have the opportunity to have fruit/vegetables at snack time.

Reception children are entitled to a free school meal but parents may wish for them to bring a packed lunch. All children eat together in the School Hall. The school encourages parents to provide a healthy lunch.

Register is taken first thing in the morning and afternoon session. Throughout the day children will be offered a range of experiences. Some of which are adult led, others are structured play activities where they initiate their own learning. Activities will take place in the classroom, others in the sheltered area and outside on the EYFS playground.

Home time is at 3.00pm. Children are only released at the end of the day to a relative/carer or known adult.

Curriculum

This term is used to describe everything children experience in school. We feel that play is a very important factor in a child's development and this is very evident in the planning. We offer a curriculum rich in wonder and memorable experiences to help develop a child's cultural capital.

Intent

- We provide a stimulating environment that provides exciting opportunities, promotes challenge, exploration, adventure and a real love of learning.
- It is our intent that all children develop physically, verbally, cognitively, socially and emotionally in an environment which values all cultures, communities and people.

- We aim for our children to be confident and independent, to believe in themselves and interact positively with others using perseverance and resilience.
- Play is an integral part of learning and this is at the heart of our early year's curriculum.
- The correct mix of adult directed and uninterrupted child-initiated play ensures the best outcomes for pupils.
- Positive relationships between staff and children, consistent routines and strong relationships with parents are key.
- The role early year's education has to play in providing firm foundations upon which the rest of a child's education is successfully based.

Implementation

We meet the welfare requirements laid down in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and actively safeguard and promote the welfare of all of our children.

- We prioritise creating a language rich environment through the use of songs, nursery rhymes, stories and providing time for quality interactions between adults and peers.
- Children are encouraged to become early readers through enjoyment of books and the systematic teaching of phonics.
- The children learn numbers through nursery rhymes and develop their mathematical thinking through direct teaching and exploration in the continuous provision.
- We want our children to become confident mathematicians who can apply what they have learnt to real life experiences.
- We have built our school environment to enable our children to strengthen their core muscles through physical play, children spend time outdoors in their natural environment in all weathers.
- They develop through wonderful, exploratory and sensory experiences in our mud kitchen, sand pit and water table.
- Our learning environment is adaptable in order to reflect children's interests and progression.
- The children are supported to learn to work together, manage their feelings and ask questions through skilled adult facilitated play.
- The curriculum is taught through topics which are enriched with classroom enhancements, trips and visitors.
- Planning is flexible and responsive to children's needs so plans can be changed and adapted dependent on children's interests.

We understand the importance of parental engagement and believe that our parents have a crucial role to play in their children's education. We work hard to create a strong partnership between home and school.

As part of the teaching and learning process, children are assessed in relation to their progress towards the Early Learning Goals. These judgements are made on the basis of accumulative observations and in-depth knowledge of the children acquired through ongoing assessment. These ongoing assessments are used to inform planning and next steps in teaching and learning for all children throughout the year.

Planning and Organising the Curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years forms the first stage of our Whole School Curriculum, which is a 2 year rolling programme. It covers children in the Reception classes. There are 7 areas of learning and development that must provide a framework for planning, teaching and assessing in early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are inter-connected.

The 3 Prime Areas are;

- Communication and Language

- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The 4 Specific Areas are;

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

The curriculum is planned through a series of themes that reflect and respond to the children's interests, offering experiences in all areas of the curriculum. They carry equal importance to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for play and child-initiated activities.

We plan in 3 different cycles; long term, medium plan and short term.

- Long term planning is the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. This is an overarching framework that informs all other stages of planning. It shows the range of experiences and learning opportunities that are available while children are in the Early Years.
- Medium term planning takes the form of a theme based upon the children's interests. It is evaluated weekly to respond to other emerging interests that the children may have.
- Short term planning involves selecting activities and learning objectives from the medium-term theme plan as deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children. Plans are extended and differentiated accordingly. Short term weekly plans also have the scope for 'spontaneous planning', based on interests as they occur throughout the week.

Teaching

Each area of learning is carefully taught through different activities. Children are sometimes taught as a whole class, in small groups or individually. Children are taught as a whole group or in larger groups daily for phonics and maths as part of adult directed teaching. Children also take part in a daily morning carousel where key skills in writing, fine motor, reading and maths are taught and developed. Children have opportunities to choose their own learning activities as part of child-initiated learning. During this time, the adult's role and interaction is vital to help build children's understanding and language development and guide new learning. The role of the adult is to model, demonstrate and question what children are doing through active participation in child's play. Children are encouraged to use resources in the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Learning environments are set up to encourage children to choose and select resources to support them in their learning. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Assessment

On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Teachers and teaching assistants observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first few weeks of school, baseline assessments are carried out to ascertain children's skills on entry to our school. Two baselines are completed – the national reception baseline assessment and our own baseline. This is to ensure all areas of the curriculum are assessed.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they have met or not met these learning goals. Throughout the

year the children are assessed to see whether they are on track or not on track to meet the learning goals. The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions and the results are then shared with parents and carers.

Marking and Feedback

Marking and feedback in the EYFS may be in response to observations of children's learning. Therefore, it will be more heavily weighted towards verbal feedback and staff discussion. Appropriate methods for marking and feedback in EYFS are;

- Regular praise and encouragement using school reward systems to celebrate the children's achievements – certificates, stars, stickers etc
- Adults talking to children individually about their achievements and how to develop their skills further
- Group time where children talk with their peers and teacher about their learning
- Annotations of photographs
- Written observations incl. post it notes
- Written feedback on worksheets incl. use of marking stampers

Non-negotiables for marking and feedback

- All work to be dated
- WALT to be written on Maths, Literacy, Phonics and Topic work
- Use of highlighters – pink = pink for think, green = green for go. Highlighters to be used for all worksheets. All marking to be done in a clear, legible handwriting style to indicate next steps when appropriate.

VF / D = Verbal Feedback / Discussed

VP = Verbal Prompt (when chn have been reminded of task/next step, but then complete independently)

S = Supported

I = Independent

CI = Child Initiated

1:1 = One to one support given

Verbal Feedback

We value the use of immediate verbal feedback in EYFS. This is always given using language appropriate to the age and stage of the child. We teach children that it is by making mistakes and taking on challenging tasks that they will learn and progress. Verbal feedback will always be positive and specific, it should then be followed by a next step or a target for future learning. Where appropriate staff will make a note of the conversation that they have had with the pupil.

The Environment

Children learn best in a stimulating but ordered environment where the opportunities for active learning are thoughtful and purposefully planned.

The classrooms should be bright, attractive and aesthetically pleasing. It should be organised into working areas, where children have easy access to a full range of materials.

The Early Years staff should provide a variety of different learning environments over time:

- Imaginative/Role Play
- Sound/Music
- Book/Language Area
- Art and Craft
- Maths/Science/Investigation
- Mark Making/Writing Area

- Construction Area
- Outdoor / Sheltered Play Area
- Sand and Water Area (Covid-19 allowing)
- Malleable Materials (Covid-19 allowing)
- Small World/Table Top Activities

Roles and Responsibilities

Effective teamwork is essential in providing an appropriate curriculum and environment for young children.

Role of the Early Years Co-ordinator

Within the Early Years Team there is a designated Early Years co-ordinator, whose role includes:

- managing the implementation of the early years curriculum including the interface between the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum
- over-seeing the drawing up and implementation of an Early Years policy
- ensuring that ALL policies and schemes of work address the needs of the youngest children
- reporting regularly to the headteacher about the achievements and planned developments for Early Years
- being an advocate to the highest possible quality and practice for young children
- training and reporting back
- supporting staff in a pastoral capacity

Role of the Teacher / Pre-School Leader

The teachers have day -to-day management responsibilities for:

- the children
- non-teaching support staff
- the organising and smooth running of the class
- overall planning, assessment and evaluation of the curriculum and the children
- creating links with colleagues in school, home, community and other agencies
- attending courses and updating themselves and the team on current practices

Role of the Teaching Assistant

They will be responsible to the pre-school Leader / teachers and

- will have a valuable and vital role within the team
- will have a special knowledge and understanding of play and will be able to present a full range of activity in a supportive role
- will have the skills to observe and report accurately
- alongside the teacher will ensure the smooth running and organisation of the class
- is able to play a part in training other teaching assistants and students
- will be willing to attend courses to further personal skills and knowledge

Job descriptions are available

Staff Training

We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so ALL staff are encouraged to participate in local education authority courses and in-school training.

Parental Involvement

Parents should be fully involved in their children's learning and we believe that a partnership between the home and early years setting contributes significantly to a child's social, personal and academic development.

Children's experiences at home are highly significant to achievement. Parents significantly influence their children's learning.

We provide opportunities for parents to come and help in the school and we value their opinions. See section **After Admission** for further information.

The following opportunities for contacts with parents are:

- Parent consultations and advice (formal and informal)
- Reports
- Use of class emails for communication
- Parent help in school activities
- Parental involvement in homework activities such as reading and Maths Passport targets
- Arranging activities to encourage collaboration between home and school – assemblies, sports day, Christmas performances etc.

Preschool

All children in the care of our Pre-school have a key worker assigned to them. It is the key worker who makes observations about the child, documents evidence and plans the next steps for that child. The pre-school activities are set up as 'free-flow' in the continuous provision, this includes both indoor and outdoor learning (weather permitting for the safety of the children). The activities are chosen based on the child's interests and needs. Children may be asked to complete specific activities by their key worker (adult-led activities). Our Preschool uses the Tapestry system for observing and assessing pupils' achievements. It is an online assessment and observational tool. It is used regularly to gather evidence of children's achievements and adult's observations and this is used to support the assessment process. This is used as part of individual assessment through the child's journey throughout pre-school. In the Spring term, practitioners review children's progress and provide parents and carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed. Along with Tapestry, the pre-school staff produce an end of year report for the parents to keep and offer Parents Evening sessions twice a year (usually November and March to coincide with the rest of the school). Data is also submitted to the headteacher at Christmas, Easter and at the end of the Summer term indicating whether the child is on track or not on track for their age. When a child is between the ages of 2 and 3, a progress check from the Local Authority is completed and submitted to the parents.

Ratio's;

1 adult to 4 children if the child is aged under 3

1 adult to 8 children if the child is aged 3-4

1 adult to 13 children if the child is aged 3-4 and the adult is a qualified teacher

Special Educational Needs

We believe that all children are entitled to a learning environment in which they are encouraged to reach their potential in a supportive atmosphere which fosters a growth towards independent learning appropriate to their age and stage of development.

We aim to identify children with special needs at the earliest possible stage and differentiate their activities accordingly.

If we feel that differentiation alone is not sufficient support then we have a Special Needs teacher who can offer support.

Support and advice to staff, children and parents/carers are given by additional outside agencies eg. Educational Psychologist, Learning Support Service, Speech Therapists and others as outlined in the school's Special Needs Policy.

Equal Opportunities

All children, regardless of gender, ability/ disability, belief, ethnic or social background, have equal access to the Early Years Curriculum.

Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

See Safeguarding policy.