



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy was drafted by Vanessa Smith and Rhianna Lowe. It was presented in draft version to the full staff compliment for discussion and revision. The final version was presented to Governors for consideration, approval and adoption.

Date adopted by Governors:	October 2023
Date for policy review:	October 2025
Person responsible for review:	EYFS Team

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1. The importance of Early Years Foundation Stage

We acknowledge the statement that 'every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential' (EYFS Statutory Framework, updated 2024).

Therefore, our EYFS seeks to provide:

- 'quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind'
- 'a secure foundation through planning for learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learnt regularly'
- 'partnership working between practitioners and parents or carers'
- 'equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported' (EYFS Statutory Framework, updated 2024).

We believe it is essential to create an environment of emotional warmth, with consistent praise and encouragement, so that each child feels individually valued, well-motivated and confident to meet new challenges and reach our high expectations with a sense of achievement.

We believe the Early Years Foundation Stage, which covers the development of children from birth to five years, is important because it is in the foundation years that children develop learning attitudes, skills, social integration and personal organisation. We see play as a central tool for learning as it is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge.

We believe learning is holistic and cannot be compartmentalized. One experience may provide children with opportunities to develop a range of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning. Each area of learning works towards a number of relevant Early Learning Goals, which most children are expected to achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage. Within Birchwood Primary School, our EYFS accommodates children from the age of 4-5 years old. Each Reception class has the equivalent of a full-time teacher and full-time teaching assistant (key workers).

We can confirm that the EYFS provision at Birchwood Primary School meets the learning and development requirements and welfare requirements as specified in the EYFS (Learning and Development Requirements) Order 2007.

2. Our EYFS Vision

At Birchwood, we aim to provide motivating first-hand experiences whilst encouraging children to build resilience, ambition and a lifelong love of learning. We aim to build on the wealth of knowledge and skills children already have when they arrive and are actively developing relationships with our feeder settings. We recognise that all children are unique, celebrating and welcoming differences within our school community. Therefore, our curriculum is child centered following the interests and fascinations of the children in the current year group. We are passionate about children leading and engrossing themselves in their learning.

3. Aims and Objectives

- Provide a curriculum that offers children a wide range of opportunities ensuring that we do not expect children to aspire to things they have never encountered. We will work on broadening their experiences providing opportunities to try new things and encouraging them to relish a new challenge
- Provide high expectations encouraging them to develop perseverance and self-belief so that they can problem solve and achieve far more than they expected

- Provide a learning environment that helps children achieve their potential and support those who need additional help in order to maximise their chances of achieving the Early Learning Goals
- Provide children opportunities to develop their sense of wellbeing and ability to regulate their feelings so that they feel confident in our community and are equipped with all the tools they need to transition to Year 1 effectively
- Develop the skills and expertise of staff working in EYFS through regular and comprehensive professional development either run by the EYFS Leads or attending courses run by other providers
- To work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions
- To have in place effective procedures to ensure the safety of children when in our care.

4. Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

The Governing Body has;

- appointed members of staff to be responsible for Early Years education;
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel and stakeholders are aware of and comply with this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- responsibility of ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- nominated a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Headteacher and Early Years Team Leaders and report back to the Governing Body;
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

5. Responsibility of the Headteacher

The Head teacher will:

- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- work closely with the link governor;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy if required

6. Role of the Early Years Team Leaders

The Early Years Team Leaders will:

- lead the development of this policy throughout the school;
- work closely with the Headteacher and the Nominated Governor;
- provide guidance and support to all staff;
- provide training for all staff when the need arises;
- keep up to date with new developments and resources;
- review and monitor;
- if required, report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

7. Role of the Nominated Governor

The Nominated Governor will:

- work closely with the Headteacher and the Early Years Team Leaders;
- ensure this policy and other linked policy is up to date;
- ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
- report to the Governing Body;
- report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy;

8. Role of Teaching and Support Staff

The teaching and support staff work:

- together as a team in conjunction with the Early Years Team Leaders;
- to promote confident and independent learners;
- to create a learning environment that reflects learning across all EYFS areas of learning and their associated Early Learning Goals

Also, the teaching and support staff work will:

- comply with all aspects of this policy;
- implement the school's equalities policy and schemes;
- report any concerns they have on any aspect of the school community

9. Teaching and Learning

Overarching principles of the EYFS:

- Every child is a unique child, who is consistently learning, 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.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on Seven Key Features of Effective Practice. The seven areas are as followed:

- The best for every child – the focus of this is that all children deserve to receive equally high provision, inclusive early education and equal chances of success
- High quality care – the focus of this is how children's learning experiences must come first and be central to all thinking. It is also explicit in describing the provision of high-quality care.
- The curriculum (what we want children to learn) – the focus of this is on planning and delivering an ambitious curriculum with flexibility, driven by children's interests
- Pedagogy – the focus of this is on play, adult modelling and guided learning as a desirable mix of learning approaches
- Assessment – the focus of this is that assessment is about noticing what children know and what they can do. Assessment does not mean lots of data and evidence
- Self-Regulation and Executive Function – the focus of this is on the mental process that enables children to be effective learners
- Partnership with parents – the focus of this is the importance of strong and mutual, respectful relationships between the setting and parents

The Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into three Prime and four Specific Areas of Learning, and three Learning Characteristics. The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development are all interconnected

The Prime Areas of Learning:

- Communication and Language – The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back and forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for learning and cognitive development. The number and quality of conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they will say with new vocabulary added; practitioners will build children’s language effectively.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead happy and healthy lives and it fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.
- Physical Development – Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and development of a child’s strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults.

The Specific Areas of Learning:

- Literacy – It is crucial for children to develop a lifelong love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of both unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).
- Mathematics – Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers.
- Understanding the World – Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children’s personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children’s vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.
- Expressive Arts and Design – The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression,

vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

- 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.

The Early Years Team Leaders are responsible for the management of the Foundation Stage team and the Foundation Stage Area.

The area covers two classrooms and two outdoor areas, which are staffed by teachers, teaching assistants and additional volunteers.

We aim to:

- create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through firsthand experiences.
- make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children are able to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day.

The inside learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: home role play, funky fingers, writing area, maths area, construction, ICT area, book area, theme area, puzzles, small world, cultural area, cutting skills, sand and water area, playdough, craft and painting.

One of the outside learning environments supports children's gross motor and social skills through the use of balance bikes, scooters, trikes as well as team games and a trim trail.

The other outside learning environment consists of a nature kitchen, digging pit, music and stage area, reading den, deconstructed construction, water investigation, planting and growing areas and exploration linked to our themes. Maths and writing activities are interwoven across the outside environment.

These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environments. Outdoor learning is different to indoors and lends itself to practical engagement and appropriate risk taking. Children need these opportunities in order to build their confidence, spatial awareness, physical strength and the ability to keep themselves safe. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. The Reception classes operate a picture board system that encourages children to select learning activities and resources independently.

10. Curriculum planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do.

We aim:

- To accommodate the different ways children learn by planning for the same learning objective in a range of different ways
- To help children consolidate their learning by revisiting the same learning objective many times
- To plan sessions to include adult and child planned activities, with uninterrupted time for the children to work in depth.

Long Term Planning

Our Long-Term plan provides an overview of the themes to be covered in the Foundation Stage over the academic year.

Medium Term Planning

We identify progression in particular aspects of the curriculum for each week of half term. We include ongoing learning opportunities, key activities and experiences, outings and visitors.

Short term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, key vocabulary and key questions, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by our systematic approach to observation and assessment. Teachers collaborate over planning, sharing ideas for activities, resources and special events.

11. EYFS and Inclusion

In line with the other school policies, Early Years aims to accommodate all children through planned differentiation and resources. This will consider the need to adapt lessons to account for children's different learning styles, especially those to whom English is an Additional Language (EAL), children with Specific Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the Gifted and Talented (G&T) pupils.

12. EYFS Pupil Premium

At Birchwood Primary School, we acknowledge that Early Years Pupil Premium money is used to benefit the children who specifically need it. We ensure that the money is spent in a way that directly impacts the children's individual educational needs.

This can happen in a variety of ways, such as:

- ensuring that both classes have full time teaching assistants to support learning at all times
- additional adults are employed specifically to support additional needs and Pupil Premium children within EYFS
- as communication and language is an integral part of a child's development and the first area of learning within the EYFS, Pupil Premium money is spent on additional language support and training of staff to deliver programmes of work to meet the needs of the children
- Resource packs are provided to families to support learning at home
- Parents are provided with support for school uniform and trips across school
- In addition, staff CPD is provided to support any children where an area of learning has been identified and a focused individual teaching strategy would be beneficial

13. Assessment for Learning

At Birchwood, we undertake assessment for learning.

Before children start at Birchwood Primary School, class teachers communicate with feeder settings and parents to gain an overview of each child and their learning journey so far. This allows for the teachers to gain an insight into the child's interests, strengths and next steps. At the beginning of the Autumn Term, parents/carers and the child are invited into school for a 'School Visit' to allow the class teacher to speak to families individually to address concerns, answer questions and provide important information regarding starting school.

Baseline assessments are carried out during the first few weeks when the children start school. This includes the Department for Education's Reception Baseline Assessment which is carried in the first six weeks of a child starting school. Within this time, all members of the EYFS team will be building relationships with all children within the setting and identifying individual learning strengths, needs and next steps,

We analyze and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. Teachers and Teaching Assistants within EYFS will contribute to the assessment process of each individual child.

Formative assessment:

This informs our everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment takes place using a range of methods suited to the child.

Each child has an individual Early Years Foundation Stage Learning Journal and Mathematics and Literacy folders, in which their learning is stored.

Summative assessment:

The EYFS Profile summarises all of the formative assessments undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against the 17 Early Learning Goals. It is completed at the end of each term by the Class Teacher. Class Teachers are expected to use their professional judgement to make these assessments, based on their knowledge and understanding of what the child knows, understands, and can do. Children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved at least the expected level for the ELGs in the prime areas of learning and the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

For each ELG, teachers must judge whether a child is: meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected); or not yet reaching this level (emerging).

As children prepare to move into Year 1 and enter Key Stage One, class teachers from both year groups will meet to discuss each child's learning journey. We ensure conversations consist of education, wellbeing, social and family details to ensure a smooth transition for both children and teachers. Year 1 teachers also come into EYFS in the Summer Term to begin to build a relationship with the children prior to the summer holidays. In addition, children get the opportunity to spend the day with their new class teacher and teaching assistant in their classroom during Summer Term.

14. EYFS equipment

The Foundation Stage Leaders will ensure:

- repairs are carried out immediately
- any equipment not deemed safe to use will be taken out of use until repaired

15. Outdoor Emergency Procedures

The Foundation Stage Leaders will:

- deal with all emergencies
- ensure first aid equipment is always present at all sessions and is adequately maintained
- ensure first aid is immediately administered to a casualty
- immediately inform the Head teacher if further medical treatment is required
- log and report any incident
- ensure parents are informed if first aid has been administered to their child
- ensure parents receive communication that their child has received a head injury
- ask parents or a nominated person to come to school and check their child

16. Toilet Facilities

The Foundation Stage Leaders will ensure:

- all children have access to the toilet before beginning any outdoor session

- no child is denied the use of the toilet
- hand washing facilities are in place

17. Role of the Parent

We ask all parents to:

- work in partnership with the school
- attend the induction process talks
- attend informal parent workshops
- attend termly parent-teacher consultation meetings
- work with their children at home on relevant learning activities initiated by the school

18. Monitoring and Effectiveness of the Policy

When the need arises the effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed by the Early Years Team Leaders, the Headteacher and the Nominated Governor and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be made to the Governors.

Policy Review Sheet

Please note any comments or suggested amendments on this sheet. You may also choose to complete your comments in confidence on a separate piece of paper. Please add your initial to any comments.
