

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy



Bourn Church of England Primary
Academy

Approved by:	Standards Committee	Date: April 2021
Last reviewed on:	Dec 2016	
Next review due by:	April 2023	

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2021 Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(EYFS\)](#).

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Foundation stage at Bourn C of E Primary Academy consists of one class with an intake of up to 30 children. We operate a single intake of children in September and children attend school full time by the third week of the new term. We currently have two teachers working a job share role (Monday-Weds, Thurs-Fri). The school's approach is to ensure as much support as possible for children in the earliest years of school, so we commit to employing a full time Teaching Assistant in Foundation Stage.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 Statutory framework of the EYFS.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language: Listening, attention and understanding, speaking.
- Physical development: Gross motor skills, fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development: self-regulation, managing self, building relationships

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy: Comprehension, word reading, writing.
- Mathematics: Number, numerical patterns
- Understanding the world: Past and present, people, culture and communities, the natural world
- Expressive arts and design: Creating with materials, being imaginative and expressive.

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning

- Playing and exploring - engagement
- Active learning - motivation
- Creating and thinking critically – thinking

4.1 Induction

Our induction process begins in the summer term with teaching staff members making visits to pre-school settings to hold informal discussions with the child's keyworker, observe the children and identify any needs the children may have. The information gathered at these visits is then used to inform our transition process planning.

Children are also invited into school for a number of 'stay and play' sessions in small groups and one 'move up morning' where they will spend time with the whole class.

Parents are invited to attend an initial information meeting. This meeting is where the transition procedures, general school information and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum are discussed. There is time for the parents to ask questions and discuss any queries they have.

Parents will also receive an information pack and will be required to complete relevant contact and health forms.

4.2 Early Years Curriculum

At Bourn, we work together to plan a well-balanced, exciting curriculum that incorporates all seven areas of learning and development. Our curriculum planning outlines half-termly themes which are accompanied by high-quality texts to engage the children in focused conversation, story-telling and role play activities. The themes offer structure; however, our plans are open and responsive to the needs and interests of the children.

We plan daily directed teaching sessions of phonics, maths and literacy which are differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. The White Rose Maths Schemes guide our maths planning which takes a mastery approach and is focused upon using manipulatives and pictorial representations. Phonics lessons follow the systematic approach set out in the 'Storytime Phonics' programme. Storytime Phonics plans are based around books and offer memorable experiences which connect learning to read with pleasure.

Our plans are led by our professional judgement of each child's achievements, interests and next steps for learning. The indoor and outdoor learning environment is carefully planned to offer children meaningful first-hand, play-based experiences, in which they can apply the knowledge they already have to enable them to explore new possibilities. To ensure our continuous provision activities and resources reflect the interests and needs of the current cohort, we regularly audit our environment and make changes where necessary.

Our planning reflects a mix of adult led and child-initiated learning. In addition to providing focused learning groups around maths, literacy and phonics, adults take focused learning into continuous provision and work alongside the children.

Where possible, we plan to incorporate natural play into our provision. Children have access to stones, shells, sticks, pine cones, conkers as well as having opportunity to interact with everyday objects such as dustpans, buckets, pegs and kitchen utensils. We provide resources for construction inside and out to enable children to build and change their environment, such as blocks, crates, tarpaulins, boxes, tyres and blankets.

We incorporate a natural approach to learning by using a grassy outdoor space which includes a mud kitchen, large climbing tyres, mud pits for digging, sand pit, large construction with tyres, crates and sticks, growing beds and a stage area. Children's wellies are stored in this area for easy access and to support independent skills when changing footwear.

To enhance children's learning in an outdoor environment, we visit the school's enclosed forest area on a weekly basis. Here, we provide opportunities for the children to engage with nature, learn new skills, develop fine and gross motor skills, build confidence and self-esteem, take risks, explore and discover the world.

Adults and children are involved in assessing risks whilst using our outdoor areas. Our teachers regularly check the sites to monitor any changes that have occurred to the sites. Additionally, the children are involved in the risk assessment process which makes them more aware of how to stay safe.

4.3 Teaching and Learning

Our Early Years ethos is embedded in the Characteristics of Effective Learning and this is reflected in our teaching. We understand how to support children's progress through play. Children have free flow access between inside and out throughout the day in all weathers. Indoor spaces are planned so that children can independently access a variety of resources and an appropriate range of activities are provided. The outdoor space is planned to give children opportunities for doing things in different ways on different scales.

Adult-led activities may be whole-class, group or individual and are determined by the needs of the class as well as their next steps in learning. Focused activities linked to the specific areas of learning provide more structured opportunities for children to learn new knowledge and skills in playful contexts. Our aim is to engage children in quality learning experiences that offer challenge through warm and positive interactions with practitioners.

We believe that oracy is an integral part of an effective education and this belief is central to the work of our practitioners in the Early Years. All children benefit from the teaching of oracy skills to ensure that their skills develop over time. We use the Talk4Writing approach, including oral retelling and story mapping to develop the children's communication and language, as well as literacy skills. By modelling the use of ambitious vocabulary and full sentences, we seek to create a challenging and language rich environment. Our Teaching Assistant is Ekklan trained, the advice and strategies from this training is used to develop the speech and language skills of all the children and provide intervention support for all children but especially those identified with speech and language difficulties.

At Bourn, we explicitly teach a growth mindset approach to learning and aim to build resilience in the children we work with. We use stories, problem solving strategies and words of encouragement to model the belief that we all have the capacity to grow our brains. Our practitioners encourage children to embrace challenges and view mistakes as an opportunity to learn; we believe these attitudes are vital to every child's progress.

5. Assessment

At Bourn Primary Academy, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Practitioners observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. We use the observation and assessment tool 'Evidence Me' to capture each child's learning experiences and create a Learning Journal. Learning Journals are used for monitoring development, creating reports and sharing progress. Our observations are also used to shape future planning.

Each child's progress across all 7 areas of learning is tracked termly so that progress can be monitored and any areas of concern identified. Each child has a termly Learning Conversation with the teacher, which helps identify a child's approach to learning, their mindset and any areas for concern. All assessments are used to adapt and plan provision. Assessment information is discussed in termly pupil progress meetings, where concerns about a child's progress are shared and plans are put in place to address an individual's needs. We take a watchful approach to children who are below where they would be expected to be on entry, we also know from years of experience where further support might be needed. Our Teaching Assistant is Elklan trained and runs speech and language intervention sessions for those identified with speech and language difficulties. Concerns about a child's progress are discussed with parents and the school SENCO. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) for additional support will be completed where necessary.

Where assessments have identified concerns, eg slow acquisition of phonemes, delayed fine motor skills hindering pencil grip and letter formation, difficulties in counting, difficulties in social interaction, additional support is provided at the earliest opportunity and progress is monitored to ensure it is having an impact.

Teachers use their professional judgement, informed by each child's Learning Journal, to complete the Early Years Profile at the end of the EYFS year. The profile is a statutory assessment that requires all children to be formally assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs), indicating whether a child is meeting the level of development expected (expected); or not yet reaching this level (emerging). The profile also includes a short commentary describing the child's 3 characteristics of effective learning. This information is then communicated to parents and carers in the child's end of year report.

Children who are eligible for Pupil Premium are discussed regularly with the Pupil Premium Lead. This ensures that additional support and intervention can be provided as early as possible, and support also provided to parents.

In preparation for transition, Early Years Profile assessment data is also shared with the Year One teacher. Reception and Year One teachers work closely to make the transition process into Year 1 as smooth and successful as it can be. Year One staff make regular visits to Reception and therefore get to know the cohort well before the end of their Reception year. The Reception children also make regular visits to the Year One classroom; these become more frequent in the Summer term and support the children with the move to a new environment.

6. Working with parents

At Bourn, we seek to develop fully working partnerships with all parents and carers. These partnerships mean that parents have the opportunity to work closely with our Early Years practitioners to support children's transition into school. Our open evening, move up day and small group 'Stay and Play' sessions in the summer term play a vital role in the transition process and mark the beginning of an essential two-way communication channel between practitioners and parents.

Our parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning and are able to view observations from school as well as share learning experiences from home through the 'Evidence Me' parent application. 'Evidence Me' is a quick and simple platform for communication with parents; their contributions to learning journals provide our practitioners with a greater understanding of what each child knows and can do. Parents are well informed about their child's learning and enjoy the insight this application offers into their child's school life.

We offer further opportunities for communication with parents throughout the year including consultations in the Autumn and Spring term and a report at the end of the Summer term. Every Friday, we hold a community assembly where parents can join us in recognising and celebrating the children's achievements. A weekly review is also sent home, ensuring that parents are kept up to date with relevant information from across the week. An information sharing session is held in the Autumn term to inform parents about our approach to teaching phonics and how best to support this at home. Further parent sessions are held throughout the year.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Standards of Education Committee every two years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Child Protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See Health and Safety Policy, First Aid Policy
Administering medicines policy	See Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Health and Safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints Policy