



BUCKLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Governors' Responsible:	Full Governing Body (FGB)
Policy Originator:	EYFS Co-ordinator
Next Annual Review Due:	Bi-annually Sept 2025

The Early Years Foundation Stage covers the development of children up to the age of five (usually the end of the Reception year). It recognises that early childhood is an important stage of life and has its own particular needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage acknowledges the many valuable skills children have developed and the importance of the role parents play in this. Children learn best from first-hand experience and learning is inter-related to help children to achieve their full potential. The overarching aim of the Early Years Foundation Stage is to help young children achieve the Early Learning Goals.

At Buckland Primary School we accept children from the age of four into our Reception classes. Some children may also be learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage in Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy should be read in conjunction with all other policy documents in the school.

AIMS

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE SETS OUT TO:

We believe that pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn best through play-based activities and first-hand experiences that are both enjoyable and challenging. We aim for them to become self-motivated, independent learners through a balance of child initiated (where children decide what they want to do) and adult led experiences.

We provide, and are continually developing, a high-quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. The curriculum is wide and varied, and builds on your child's existing knowledge, skills and experiences.

- challenge children and set high expectations for learning
- present the children with a structured programme of activities which is responsive to the needs of individuals, fostering learning across the prime and specific areas of learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- provide a secure, stimulating and challenging learning environment which encourages children to work and play independently
- develop children's ability to cooperate with one another and to listen to and value others
- develop each child's knowledge, skills and enjoyment in all areas of experience, building on prior learning
- provide activities and experiences in response to the assessment of individual children's progress
- establish good partnerships with parents and carers, where they feel valued and able to contribute to and participate in, school life
- ensure that children with special needs are identified early and appropriate arrangements are made for them
- ensure that the progress of vulnerable children is monitored closely

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE PHASE LEADER:

- monitors the quality and the appropriateness of provision
- is a member of the school's Leadership Team
- ensures that Early Years' considerations are addressed in school policies
- holds responsibility for the Foundation Stage budget
- monitors planning and practice within the Early Years Foundation team

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE LEAD:

- ensures the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment is completed in line with statutory guidance
- ensures resources are appropriately allocated
- ensures all staff are aware of the Foundation Stage policy and induction procedures

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- attends borough and Local Authority courses for Early Years co-ordinators
- identifies staff training needs

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE TEACHERS:

- plan and provide an appropriate curriculum
- work with the SENCO in the early identification of children with special needs
- complete records and reports for each child
- establish and maintain a positive relationship with parents and carers
- communicate with parents on children's progress through regular discussion, including parents' evenings
- monitor and record progress of all children and document appropriately

THE HEADTEACHER:

- ensures that issues involving the Early Years are included in the School Development Plan
- disseminates appropriate national and Local Authority documentation to the EYFS leader
- has overall supervision of the admission procedures and achievement and progress of children in the EYFS
- ensures sufficient funding is available to support the maintenance and development of resources

LUNCHTIME SUPERVISORS:

- liaise with Reception staff throughout the induction period and beyond
- should be vigilant about the health and safety of the Reception children
- should be aware of the specific needs of young children and create a caring and secure environment

MEET THE TEACHER (1:1 SESSIONS)

We believe that it is important to forge a partnership between home and school right from the start. Children and their parents are invited to come into school and meet with their class teacher and teaching assistant before the induction process begins. We feel that this helps us to develop home-school links in the following ways:

- it opens lines of communication between home and school
- it allows parents to discuss concerns or anxieties in private, including specific health or dietary needs
- it allows staff to meet children 1:1 and begin to establish relationships
- it allows children to visit their classroom without the rest of the class, enabling them to become more familiar with the new surroundings
- it helps children feel confident that their parents and teachers know each other

INDUCTION TO THE RECEPTION CLASSES

The children have a gradual introduction to Reception classes, which settles them in to their new environment and introduces new friends. Such an introduction also gives staff a chance to get to know the children quickly and gives time to assess their abilities and needs which will form the basis of a carefully planned programme of work.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents have a central role in supporting their child's learning. Staff should demonstrate a commitment to developing a positive partnership with parents and carers with a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and a willingness to co-operate. Also see the school's Home-School-Partnership Agreement.

We aim to do this through:

- inviting parents to induction meetings; including at least one during the term before their child starts school and another in September
- giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school
- encouraging parents to talk to Reception staff if there are any concerns
- welcoming parents to spend time in their child's class working with the children

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LEARNING AND TEACHING

Early Years Foundation Stage staff aim to provide children with the social and emotional support they need during their first year at school. They help children adjust to the new social context in which they find themselves and to a range of new challenges, fostering confidence in learning. Staff aim to create successful and stimulating learning situations for individuals and groups. Children will often work collaboratively with their peers and with adults who are able to extend their natural curiosity through questioning and suggestion. Every opportunity is taken to support children's learning through meaningful contexts including play.

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

We aim to create a welcoming, well-organised and engaging learning environment which provides children with opportunities for discovery across the curriculum. We provide a continuous provision enabling pupils to easily access the resources they need within their learning and play-based experiences. Pupils are encouraged to be creative and use resources in many ways, they are taught how to handle equipment carefully and to help with tidying up, encouraging a sense of responsibility from the children.

We aim to develop self-motivated, independent learners through a balance of child initiated (where children decide what they want to do) and adult led experiences. We provide, and are continually developing, a high-quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. The curriculum is wide and varied, and builds on the children's existing knowledge, skills and experiences. We ensure that the physical layout of the classroom and outside learning area enables these opportunities.

Along with our continuous provision we appreciate the need for flexibility in order to challenge and stimulate. We will ensure pupils have access to resources to enable writing and maths opportunities within all areas, not just at one designated place

Pupils should be able to access resources within the Reception learning environment including:

- an outdoor classroom which reflects a wide range of learning experiences
- writing materials, including various writing implements and papers
- maths resources enabling children to select appropriate items to help them solve practical problems and challenges
- art resources inside and outside for a range of art, design and technology activities
- a book corner containing a range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and class-made books
- construction resources for developing gross and fine motor skills, social interaction and problem solving
- small world opportunities which allow children to extend fine motor skills, engage in imaginative play and develop language
- sand and water play, where children can engage in practical investigations
- role play which can be developed along themed lines to cover several aspects of learning in "real life" scenarios

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM

Throughout their time in the Reception Year our children partake in an ambitious curriculum which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards the end of Reception goals. These goals are defined as Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which serve as a foundation for future learning. It is an important, distinct stage which aims to support and develop:

- personal, social and emotional well-being
- social skills
- positive attitudes towards learning
- attention skills

Our curriculum encompasses seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected, enabling children to work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships, and thriving. **These are called the prime areas:**

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- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social, and emotional development.

Four areas help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas. **These are called the specific areas:**

- literacy
- mathematics understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

None of these areas of learning and development can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development.

As previously outlined our curriculum incorporates learning through play, learning by adults modelling, by observing each other and through guided learning and direct teaching. It is also important to highlight that our plans are flexible to allow us to respond quickly to children's new interests and/or needs. In addition, weaved throughout the EYFS curriculum are three Characteristics of Effective 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

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly.

Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Play is a very important feature of children's early learning. Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build on ideas, develop social skills and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. Play allows the children to explore feelings and fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

PLANNING

Successful planning involves clear perceptions about the objectives of the curriculum and how different activities can contribute towards their achievement. Curriculum planning should be related to:

- * the children's stage of development
- * individual needs
- * the Early Learning Goals for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- * assessment and progression

Planning is seen as a continuous process. Learning intentions are identified and supporting experiences and activities are planned. Adults observe children's responses to these activities and use this knowledge to promote and extend learning. There is a continuous cycle involving planning, observing and assessing.

PLANNING PROCESS

1. **Long term curriculum planning**, which is part of the whole school planning, ensures continuity, progression and coverage.
2. **Medium term planning**, which may focus on a specific area of learning under a topic heading or question. This identifies broad learning intentions for all areas of learning, assessment opportunities and differentiation.
3. **Short term planning** shows specific learning intentions, supporting activities and daily organisation. It identifies in more detail differentiation and assessment and opportunities for observation, this then feeds back into future planning needs.

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OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) takes place through observations of what the pupils can do and what they say, enabling staff to plan a curriculum that will meet the needs of individuals and ensure effective continuity and progression. Observations and assessments are built into the planning process.

The observation and assessment of children's learning helps to:

- * inform planning
- * ensure obstacles to learning are identified and responded to
- * provide an all-round picture of the child's development
- * provide information which can be used to evaluate the quality of curriculum provision

Evidence of children's progress and achievement is collected through:

- * observations
- * questioning and interaction
- * samples of work
- * talking to parents and colleagues

All members of the Reception team should be involved in the observation process.

Each child will have their own individual 'Learning Journey' file which will include observations and pieces of the work which show significant moments of pupil progress in school. We will also ask parents to tell us about their child's achievements at home through 'Wow' vouchers, these will be added to their individual 'Learning Journeys', enabling us to build as complete and rounded a picture of each child as possible. All children will be encouraged to look at and enjoy their own Learning Journey regularly, they will also have opportunities to share these with parents throughout the school year.

BASELINE AND ON ENRY ASSESSMENT

During the first few weeks of school, we will be assessing the knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils using a format devised within school by the Reception teachers, which will include a wide range of tasks covering the EYFS curriculum. This provides the teaching staff with a valuable insight into the pre-school experiences of each child and helps to mould the educational programme or provision for each individual. The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment will be completed within the first six weeks of the Autumn term in line with statutory guidance. The assessment carried out at the end of the Reception year will be in line with national expectations.

RECORD KEEPING

Record keeping should start at the beginning of the child's school career and take account of previous experiences. Recording and reporting of children's performance should be thorough and intelligible to all concerned.

Records help teachers to:

- * monitor children's progress
- * evaluate the curriculum and the children's response to it
- * plan curriculum development

Confidentiality of all records is respected.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

In the Reception classes, communication between parents/carers and staff take place daily. Parents are invited to make appointments to see staff should the need arise. Children's progress is reported more formally at open evenings held twice a year and a written report is given at the end of the school year. Parent's evenings provide an opportunity to discuss children's work, share information concerning all aspects of the child's development and progress and to set new targets for the child, along with advising on the best way parents can help.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All children have equal access to the Early Years curriculum. On a day-to-day basis the team ensures the provision of equal opportunity, taking care to provide a range of activities which reflect the different interests and experiences of the children. We aim to use materials and resources which reflect cultural diversity, and which avoid stereotyping. We value each child's language, gender, ethnicity, faith background, expression of feeling, ideas and emotions. It is our firm belief that it is only through valuing all aspects of the child that we can build the strong relationships which are so important if the child is to have a firm foundation for his or her future attitudes to learning.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The early identification of children with special educational needs is important and the SEN code of practice is followed throughout the school. The Early Years staff liaise with parents and the SENCO in order to meet the needs of individual children where necessary. It is important to remember that very young children develop at very different rates. Foundation Stage children should therefore be assessed accordingly and with sensitivity. The end of year assessment provides additional evidence to support concerns related to progress and learning difficulties and to identify those children who may be particularly able or gifted in certain areas.

Reviewed by: Lucy Wales (EYFS phase lead) & Gemma Manandhar (EYFS Lead)

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