



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Date adopted: January 2025

Date reviewed: July 2025

Date to be reviewed: July 2028

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INTRODUCTION

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2021

Early childhood is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives.

Here at Birdlip Primary School, we understand and respect that all children have individual needs. We recognise that children develop at different rates and learn in different ways. We believe that all children should be both challenged and given opportunities to reach their full potential.

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception year.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

Children arrive in Reception class with a wide variety of life experiences. The teacher, teaching assistant and parents work closely together to build upon prior learning and experiences. In forming positive relationships with parents from the start, we ensure the best care and provision is provided for each individual child. The teacher and Teaching assistant ensure that children's interests are kept at the heart of all planning and play opportunities in order to keep children motivated and enjoy their learning experiences. Similarly, observations and home-school communication play a key part in informing topics and activities that the children will enjoy taking part in.

AIMS

Our priority is for children to be happy, confident and see learning as a positive and desirable experience. We aim to provide a broad and varied curriculum to allow each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and intellectually.

At Birdlip we aim to:

- encourage a positive attitude to school, making each child feel secure, valued and listened to.
- encourage children to relate confidently to adults and to each other, and to work co-operatively. This forms the basis of the social skills that children will take with them as they progress through school.
- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and encourage decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence.
- work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions in order to maintain a holistic approach to the child's development.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are 7 areas of learning. These are sub-divided by 'prime areas' and 'specific areas of learning'. The 'prime areas' form the basis of some of the most important key skills a child will need to gain during their foundation year, in order to achieve their full potential throughout primary school. The 'specific areas of learning' outline the more formalised and academic outcomes and skills we would hope a child would achieve during their first year at school.

PRIME AREAS:

1. **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

This area of learning is vital to children's success in all other learning. It incorporates skills, attitudes and understanding and includes children's personal, social, moral and spiritual development. These establish a good attitude to learning and reinforce a positive self-image. Children are given opportunities to develop skills in:

- **Self-Regulation**

With a focus on understanding their emotions and those of others, setting and working towards goals and giving focused attention.

- **Managing Self**

With a focus on showing confidence and independence in tasks, understanding the reasoning for rules and managing their own personal and hygiene needs.

- **Building Relationships**

- With a focus on working and playing with others, showing an awareness of their needs and forming positive attachments and relationships with friends and working adults.

2. **Communication and Language**

Language development and communication receive a high priority. We help children to enrich their vocabulary, speak clearly and listen attentively, take part in conversations and communicate with others. Children are encouraged to ask questions and explain their knowledge in a range of situations and become more confidence speaking aloud and within a group.

Children are given opportunities to develop skills in:

- **Listening, Attention and Understanding**

With a focus on listening attentively to others in a number of contexts, responding appropriately and engaging in back and forth conversation.

- **Speaking**

Participating in conversations in a number of contexts, adapting newly learnt vocabulary and providing explanations, expressing ideas and using tenses correctly.

3. **Physical Development**

Children use a range of equipment, materials and tools to develop their physical control, mobility, manipulative skills and awareness of space, in both indoor and outdoor environments. Skills are developed in a progressive way through repetition and practice. A positive attitude to a healthy and active way of life is encouraged.

Children are given opportunities to develop skills in:

- **Gross Motor Skills**

With a focus on safely negotiating space and obstacles and moving in a safe way that shows consideration of others as well as showing strength, co-ordination and balance and exploring different ways of moving.

- **Fine Motor Skills**

With a focus on using tools correctly and with provision to make change and form letters correctly.

SPECIFIC LEARNING AREAS:

4. Literacy

Throughout the reception year, children will be exposed to a number of written and picture texts, both fiction and non-fiction. They will learn a repertoire of stories, both traditional and non-traditional and will learn about features of text as well as gaining comprehension skills. Children will also learn to write by applying phonic strategies to help them sound and decode words. Children will write for a variety of purposes and begin to develop an awareness of good sentence features such as simple punctuation.

Children are given opportunities to develop skills in:

- **Comprehension**

With a focus on demonstrating an understanding of stories through retelling key events, using related and new vocabulary and anticipating further events.

- **Word Reading**

With a focus on saying a sound for each letter of the alphabet as well as at least 10 digraph sounds. Reading words and sentences consistent with their phonetic knowledge as well as some common exception words.

- **Writing**

With a focus on writing correctly formed letters and using phonetic strategies to spell and decode words and sentences that can be read by themselves and others.

5. Maths

Children will develop secure mathematical skills such as problem solving, reasoning and counting during the school year. They will learn a number of concepts through a large range of both practical and written activities such as songs, games and imaginative play. Children will find many mathematical opportunities during their play and in other areas of learning.

Children are given opportunities to develop skills in:

- **Number**

With a focus on having a deep understanding of numbers to 10, including its composition and numbers bonds, doubling facts and use of subitising skills.

- **Numerical Patterns**

With a focus on verbally counting beyond 20 and recognising the pattern of the number system. Comparing quantities using language such as more than and less than and recognising when something is equal. Exploring and representing number patterns such as that of odds and evens.

6. Understanding the World

Children are encouraged to develop their knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people, including historical figures and features of the natural and man-made world. This provides a foundation for their historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning. Children are given opportunities to develop skills in:

- **Past and Present**

With a focus on discussing people close to them and their roles within society including past events encountered through fiction, non-fiction and storytelling. Identifying similarities and differences between now and the past.

- **People, Culture and Communities**

With a focus on using observation to discuss and identify the environment around them and how this may differ to that of another place or country. Use maps, non-fiction and other forms of information to draw comparisons between different religious and cultural communities.

- **The Natural World**

With a focus on exploring the natural world through them by making observations and drawings of plants and animals. Using experiences and observations to draw similarities between environments and understanding important processes and changes in the natural world, such as that of season change.

7. Expressive Arts

Children are encouraged to develop their own creativity through a wide range of sensory experiences. They use a range of tools, textures, medias and colours to create finished pieces. They development their imagination and the ability to explore, express and share ideas and feelings through different forms of communication such as dance, music and drama.

Children are given opportunities to develop skills in:

- **Creating with Materials**

With a focus on exploring a use of different tools, textures, medias, forms and colours and enjoying sharing their work and processes with others. Using creative forms to support role play, such as making props or resources.

- **Being Imaginative and Expressive**

With a focus on becoming familiar with a range of well-known songs and nursery rhymes and enjoying exploring sounds, music, dancing and other forms of expression such as storytelling and role-play.

Play

For young children, purposeful play is an essential and rich part of the learning process. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. The Early Years' Curriculum is generally delivered through structured play where the learning has been clearly defined. Play offers the chance to explore, discover and create imaginary situations. It develops confidence, concentration, perseverance, problem solving skills and self-esteem. Play encourages the ability to make choices and provides opportunities to explore new and challenging situations. Play also requires children to negotiate with others and form close relationships to a range of other children.

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. Our planning cultivates these interests but is flexible and changeable depending on the nature of the day and the children's interests. Observations also play a key part in the planning process and regular monitoring and assessment aids the further consolidation of particular learning areas. All practitioners who work in reception at Birdlip are involved in this process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

- Each year we create a framework of topics, which give structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the 3 terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to determine broad and balanced coverage. The EYFS and KS1 teaching staff decide on the names of the topics, informed by the interests of the children. The content and learning challenges within each topic are then led and suggested by the children. Some of the early learning goals provide a focus for certain terms, particularly those relating to Knowledge and Understanding of the World. The topic titles may often act as an umbrella covering several smaller or even 1 day topics.
- All Topics are tailored to the interests of the children and can be altered/ adapted.

Past and frequent topics have often covered:

- 'All about me' as a initial 'getting to know' topic for all the new reception children
- Space
- animals
- Under the sea
- Journeys
- Minibeasts
- Fantasy

Medium Term Planning

- We begin the planning process by creating a topic web which include questions and ideas from the children as well as extra ideas from teaching staff in the class.
- We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. We include links between areas of learning and development.
- Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

- We identify specific learning objectives, 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 on-going observational assessment.
- At Birdlip we follow the early learning goals and additional statements set out in the EYFS.

STAFFING AND ORGANISATION

In EYFS, there are 15 children and 2 adults. Mrs Locke is the class teacher and is full time. Miss Higgs the teaching assistant Tuesday to Friday. Ms Sykes-White is covering Monday. Mrs Jowett-Moore is The PPA teacher and teaches on Thursday morning.

LIAISON WITH PRE-SCHOOL SETTINGS AND INDUCTION

Pre-Schools and Local Nurseries

- At Birdlip we maintain some close links between the onsite play group and the Reception class as many of these individuals will attend school with us upon finishing at their setting. Links are made through summer term play visits, joint sports day races and through the watching of each other's setting nativity productions.

Induction

- A new parents meeting is held in June to introduce the school's expectations and routines, to outline the induction process and Reception Curriculum. Parents/guardians also have the opportunity to meet the class teacher and teaching assistant and to visit the Reception classroom.
 - Parents/guardians are given the 'EYFS Instruction Manual' which outlines the Reception Curriculum and school routines, along with a document pack to be completed and returned to school. Uniform and reading folder orders are available for collection at this meeting or from the school office.
 - This is then followed by a phone call with parents. Questions are asked about their likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses as well as allowing time for parents and carers to ask any questions they might have.
 - Transfer records from pre-school settings inform Reception practitioners about the new intake.
 - During the induction period children will attend school part time as stated in the information pack sent home to parents. This allows:
 - children to feel secure in their new environment and gradually build up to fulltime attendance
 - the practitioners to get to know the children individually and establish good relationships
 - the Reception teacher to carry out a baseline assessment
- . A child reaches statutory school age at the beginning of the term following his/her fifth birthday.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults." ("Early Years Foundation Stage", Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2015)

At Birdlip we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves.

The Learning Environment

- We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.
- All activities are planned for inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play, book corner, writing table, art area, construction, maths shelves, sand, water, etc . These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment.
- Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. Children are encouraged to make good judgements about what play and resource are appropriate during particular times. Self-help resources and where to access them are frequently modelled in play interactions and through adult led sessions. E.g. the use of a letter mat or collecting counting resources from the shelves.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND MONITORING

At Birdlip we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse 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. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles.

- Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations recorded on group assessment sheets, baseline assessment, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents.
- Each child has an individual Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile folder in which this evidence is stored. We plan for observational assessment when undertaking our medium and short term planning. Assessments and observations are made in relation to the learning areas and development matters age-related outcomes.

Summative assessment

The EYFS Profile summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against the 17 Early Learning Goals. Children are assessed as to whether they are 'emerging' against the ELG's or have met 'expected' level.

- Summative assessment is completed at the end of the Autumn term/term 2, Spring term/term 3 and the Summer term/term 5 by the teacher and teaching assistant. All assessments are now recorded on a computer system, before being sent to the LEA in June.

For further information see the Assessment Policy.

- Teaching and learning in Literacy and Maths is monitored by the literacy and mathematics coordinators once a year in each class, through lesson observations and pupil interviews.
- Other areas of learning and development in the foundation stage are monitored in this way by the respective co-ordinators.
- The foundation stage leader monitors teaching and learning across the foundation stage each year and analyses EYFS Profile data in conjunction with the head teacher.

RECEPTION TO YEAR 1 TRANSITION

Reception and Year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At Birdlip:

- children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the Reception year
- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support
- Reception children meet the year 1 teacher frequently during, assemblies, transition afternoons and other whole school activities during the Reception year.
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July
- Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for a morning session in July
- During afternoons, Year 1 children will join EYFS for some shared sessions that typically involve more play-based or open ended opportunities, such as that of Music, PSHE and P.E. This gives them an opportunity to transition to a more formal style of learning in a gradual way. This also allows children in Year 2 to have more focused time with their class teacher in order to prepare them for the end of KS1.
- learning is planned for the outdoor environment in Year 1 during certain topics and depending on staffing.

HOME/SCHOOL LINKS

We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by

- outlining the reception curriculum to parents/guardians during the new parents meeting in July, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- encouraging parents/guardians to complete the home/school admissions booklet
- Keeping parents informed of the child's development through photo observations using an online journal 'Evidence me'
- Using 'Google classroom' to encourage parents to share achievements at home
- sending home a termly topic web, informing parents/guardians of the learning that will be taking place at school, with suggestions of the types of activities that could be carried out at home to support that learning
- holding parent/guardian information meetings on phonics, mathematics and guided reading to promote knowledge and understanding of these areas.

- operating an “open door” policy, whereby parents/guardians can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- encouraging parents/guardians to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary
- encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home e.g number hunts, re-telling stories, practising letter sounds.
- discussing individual targets with parents/guardians at parents’ evening in October and February.
- providing an annual written report to parents/guardians in July summarising the child’s progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

At Birdlip we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. For further information see Birdlip School’s Equal Opportunities Policy and Equality Policy.

INCLUSION

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special medical needs e.g. allergies, thus increasing the adult/pupil ratio. Children who also require further support in particular areas in order to maintain progress, may be offered short intervention sessions with a teaching assistant.

Educational Healthcare Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school’s Special Educational Needs Policy. Reception teachers discuss these targets with the child and his/her parents/guardians. Progress is monitored and reviewed every two terms.

The school’s SEN co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

For further information see Birdlip School’s Special Educational Needs Policy and Inclusion Policy.