



Adopted: September 2025

Review Date: September 2026

Intent:

At Birdlip, we understand that what happens in the Early Years Foundation Stage is pivotal to the promotion of a lifelong love of learning. During this crucial year, we aim to encourage children to build on the skills that they have already developed in their early lives and continue to play, learn and explore in a safe and nurturing environment. In this we help them foster rich, positive relationships with their peers and adults so that they have the foundations from which to be confident, motivated and happy. We recognise that each child is an individual and that their likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses deserve their own recognition to enable them to learn in an effective way. We constantly observe and reflect on how our children are exploring and learning through the use of the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' and use this as a basis to understand our children's further needs and next steps. Our provision is designed to spark curiosity and creativity, offering open ended opportunities for children to explore, investigate, and think critically, allowing them to develop problem solving skills and think for themselves. Regular enhancements are made to these areas in response to children's engagement and enjoyment.

We recognise that Birdlip is a small community and like our school motto, we are 'helping each other prepare for a bigger world' but in doing so, we must expose our young children to a rich, diverse curriculum that celebrates and embraces differences. Therefore our curriculum is carefully planned to allow for opportunities to understand the wider world, have first-hand experiences and address misconceptions. We feel that doing so equips our children with the skills they need for life but also allows for a smoother transition into Key Stage 1 as happy, well-rounded individuals.

Implementation:

The Early Years curriculum has been carefully built and the learning opportunities for its class are crafted to ensure progression and repetition in terms of embedding key learning, knowledge and skills. For example,

Teaching & Learning

- The school has a detailed Early Years curriculum map and illustrates the key topics and skills taught across the school year. Each year is split into three themed topics which aim to cover key skills, text exposure, progression in Phonics and Maths and practical experiences and enrichments.
- Progression is modelled across the year based upon the common themes in age-development milestones. This is informed by the non-statutory guidance from 'Development Matters (2023)' However, best early years practice shows that learning should be flexible and adapted to the needs of the children. This also informs the topic ideas and interests within each term.
- In EYFS, learning is delivered through a combination of child-initiated play and adult-direct activities. Children have daily structured phonics sessions as well as daily exposure to Maths and Literacy opportunities. Children have frequent 'topic' sessions throughout the week, in which other areas of the EYFS curriculum are delivered.
- Our phonics is built on the Read Write Inc framework, which systematically teaches children to decode and encode words through a structured and engaging approach. This ensures children develop a strong foundation in phonics, enabling them to become confident readers and writers.

By following this structured programme, we provide a consistent and effective approach to teaching phonics, supporting children's literacy development and future academic success.

- Children's interactions and experiences in learning and play are captured through observations. These can be in the form of photos, videos and notes which are captured through an observation system called 'Evidence Me'
- Some work is recorded physically, depending on the appropriateness of the task. For example, most adult-directed written work is collected via a topic book or in letter formation books. However, child-led recording is usually captured via photos.
- Maths is taught in very practical ways, often with play based themes following the guidance of the Rose Maths' scheme. Therefore, the large majority of work is captured via notes, videos and photographs. Teaching in this way allows children to really secure their understanding of Mathematical concepts.
- Vocabulary plays an important role in all of our adult-directed teaching and in facilitating child-led experiences. The classroom 'Word Wall' is frequently used to display common words, unusual vocabulary and story related language. The wall is referred to frequently as a spelling tool as well as to encourage children to enhance their story making skills with exciting vocabulary.
- Literacy based tasks and provision are planned using texts that are carefully selected to ensure some cross-curricular links as well as different exposure to text types, vocabulary and interests of the children.
- Children have regular adult-led writing opportunities as well as opportunities in their child-led provision in the form of a writing area and outdoor writing provision. Fine motor skills are assessed early as to ascertain readiness for writing and identify where children may need further support to pencil grip and control. Letter formation forms a daily part of the first term of phonics as well as being a regular timetabled activity at later stages. Elements of our whole school handwriting scheme 'Kinetic letters' is introduced when appropriate. The Kinetic Letters handwriting scheme is a physical, multisensory approach designed to help develop strong handwriting skills through movement-based learning. By combining gross and fine motor exercises with letter formation, it builds core strength, posture, and confidence, enabling children in the EYFS to write with greater ease and fluency.

Children will be exposed to a number of text types over the year and will learn to write for pleasure, purpose and understanding through individual tasks, group and teacher modelling.

- Reading plays an important role in our daily timetable and children are read to at least once a day as a whole class as well as being encouraged to access our free-flow reading provision, indoors and out. Children are heard reading 1 to 1 twice a week with an adult. Reading books are carefully selected from our scheme to match children's phonetic ability and ensure that they make good progress from their starting points.
- Children who are identified as having additional needs are closely supported by staff and in partnership with parents to ensure their needs are met. This may be through the use of a MyPlan, EHCP or HCP as well as the daily management of their timetable, change of provision where appropriate and differentiation of tasks. Where needed, transition meetings may take place in the summer before the child starts reception to address the child's needs, interests and difficulties as well as discussing any parental concerns or questions. Regular risk assessments are carried out for everyday practises and provision and particularly where contexts may provide change or challenge, for example school trips.
- Differentiation is evident in child-led provision in the way questioning, resources and challenges are used. For example, staff may encourage children to use a different type of tweezer to pick up objects or items if they are finding it tricky or may challenge a child to transport objects in a measured period of time if they are exceeding their task. Staff make use of regular open-ended questions to encourage children to think for themselves and make their own links. For example, 'I wonder what would happen if...?' or 'How could this be changed?'

- At the beginning of the year, the first term is used effectively to get to know the children's individual needs and strengths in different areas. Staff build on this by thinking about the level of challenge in their group tasks without necessarily being reliant on 'ability groups'. This may be achieved through questioning, duration of task, number of steps and/or language used.
- At Birdlip we interweave our values '**Resilience, Respect and Kindness**' through all that we do and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Children are encouraged to show **resilience** through developing their independence skills and finding ways to help themselves when things are difficult. Children are taught the importance of **respect** and remembering to use their manners and polite words in appropriate contexts. Children are encouraged to be **kind** to both adults and peers and use positive phrases and actions to build relationships.

The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework (2025) provides the curriculum guidance which informs our planning and assessment choices. It is formed of two main groups of learning areas.

Prime Areas:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Areas of Learning:

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

Within each area, there are subcategories which each come with a 'Early Learning Goal' which children aim to meet by the end of Reception.

Parental Engagement

- Parents are heavily involved in the reception year at Birdlip. Prior to children attending in September, phone calls home are made to familiarise the parents and children with the class teacher and address any questions or concerns they may have. This is also a vital part of the process of finding out the child's likes and dislikes, strength and weaknesses as well as important information relevant to medical, family and emotional needs.
- Parents are invited to attend a 'New to EYFS Information evening' in the summer term prior to their child attending school. This session discusses in detail what can be expected during the reception year but also as a school. Parents are encouraged to ask questions and use the session to get to know one another as well as forming relationships with school staff.
- Children have 2 induction sessions during the summer term before starting to get to know the school routines and practices. Times are staggered later than usual school drop off times to allow for parents to stop and discuss questions or areas of concern with the school staff.
- Throughout their child's reception year, parents are involved in a number of ways including the receipt of electronic learning journeys, open afternoons, encouragement to listen to children read in school and attendance of the KS1 Nativity.
- Parents have the option to reply directly to electronic observations and provide their own thoughts, responses and photos from home. We also send out regular updates on class activities, photos and videos via google classroom. Challenges are frequently set to give children opportunities to showcase and practise their skills at home and teachers and staff try and use modelling and example videos to help parents understand their role in facilitating this.

Assessment

- Assessment in Early Years is largely drawn from observations of the child but also includes parents' contributions and the teacher's professional judgement.
- At the beginning of the year, a government initiated 'Baseline Assessment' is carried out to provide a snapshot assessment of the child's attainment within key areas of learning. This assessment is carried out via electronic means and needs to be completed within the first six weeks of reception. Teachers will also make their own formative assessments about where they think the child is.

- Transition records provided from previous settings and childminders are also taken into account to help inform these judgements.
- Throughout the year, as well as regular observations, teachers will make non-statutory assessments in areas such as phonics and Maths to track children's progress and learning throughout the year.
- At the end of the year, a EYFS profile is completed for each child. The child is assessed against each of the Early Learning Goals for each area of learning and indicates whether the child is emerging or expected within that area. Local cluster meetings take place to ensure that teachers feel confident in their decisions and have opportunities to advise and support each other. This data is reported to the local authority and the government.

Monitoring

- Regular meetings are held with EYFS staff to monitor observations and talk about upcoming planning ideas.
- EYFS staff attend school staff meetings and take part in all whole school writing and Mathematics moderations.
- Birdlip forms part of a local schools cluster where termly cluster meetings take place to discuss developments in early years policy and practice.
- A local cluster school moderation also takes place prior to profile submission in June.

Examples of Practice

- Children in EYFS have access to a large outside area where they can access continuous provision. This forms an extension of the learning environment in the classroom.
- Children in EYFS have enjoyed the installation of a sand pit in the outside area. It has offered rich opportunities for sensory exploration, imaginative play, and social interaction. It supports physical development through digging, pouring, and scooping, while also enhancing early mathematical and scientific thinking as children explore concepts like volume, texture, and cause and effect.
- Children are often observed reading a familiar book to their friends or making their own interpretations using the puppet theatre or using teddies.
- In our construction area, children engage in imaginative building and creating using various materials like blocks, LEGO and K'nex. Through this play, they develop problem solving skills, hand-eye coordination, and creativity while bringing their ideas to life.
- On our outdoor stage, EYFS pupils develop their imagination, creativity and communication skills through role play, storytelling, and performance. They build confidence, learn to express themselves effectively, and collaborate with peers. Q a
- In EYFS we make use of a 'WOW WALL' where 'special' pieces of work/drawings/models are selected (or photos are taken) to be displayed temporarily for everyone to see and children are given opportunities to share their processes as well as applauding their friends' efforts. When the wall is full and more room needs to be made, we take a piece down and everyone applauds them again for their efforts before they take their work home. This has created a really positive system of turn-taking, tolerance and patience as well as increasing children's skills in showing kindness and appreciation.

Curriculum Leadership

- Reading lead - Jen Locke.
- Writing lead - Hayley Groves.
- Mathematics lead - James Pugh and Alanah Wilmott
- PSHE lead – Mary Jowett-Moore
- There is a clear role in designing the curriculum, monitoring and improvement.
- There is an action plan in place.
- There is a plan for scrutiny of work and analysis of data from Insight.
- There is provision to ensure the subject is suitably resourced.
- Staff training and CPD is available and encouraged.

Impact:

By the time our children leave reception, we hope for them to be happy, well-rounded individuals with a passion for learning and readiness for the next challenge that awaits them. We take time to consider how the transition into Year 1 may affect our children and ensure that we find ways to prepare them personally, emotionally and socially in the term that precedes this.

We strive for our children to meet their Early Learning Goals in all seven areas and regular assessments enable us to identify where our children are going to need support, where they may need further intervention as well as where they may need further challenge. Our children enter with a range of starting points and early observations and interactions help us to inform how we plan, how we meet their needs and how we make excellent progress from these starting points.

At the end of Reception we believe our children:

- Have a strong sense of identity and feel valued, nurtured and appreciated for the person they are.
- Are well prepared for Year 1 and have already formed closed relationships with their older peers and teachers.
- Show kindness, tolerance and respect for others.
- Understand that they should always try their best and show resilience and perseverance when they are faced with challenges.