Early Years Policy

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Due for Review: July 2026

Badger Hill Primary School
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

Early childhood forms the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Badger Hill Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development; however, we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/carers, support staff and teachers work effectively together to support children's learning and development. Quality and consistency is vital so that all children make progress, no child is left behind.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

1. A unique child
2. Positive relationships
3. Enabling environments
4. Learning and development

Our vision for Early Years

In our Early Years we aim to build positive relationships with families. We offer a welcoming, safe and happy environment. Children thrive through child-led play, developing skills and knowledge to support their learning journeys. Our classrooms inspire awe and wonder, language development, diversity and curiosity with challenges to promote independence and resilience. In partnership with families, we prepare, nurture and support children to achieve the readiness they need for the next steps in their school lives.

Aims

We believe that children learn best when they have the confidence to learn for themselves, through interacting with others, and through play. Our aims are;

- To provide a happy, safe and challenging programme of learning and development for the children.
- To provide a broad balanced, relevant and creative curriculum to give firm foundations for future learning, fostering independence, self-confidence and decision making.
- To encourage children to be a positive member of the diverse world.
- To assess and value each individual child's abilities and help them progress.
- To develop excellent relationships with parents/carers in order to build a strong partnership.
- To provide a caring and inclusive environment, with sensitivity to all children.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop to their full potential socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.

The Curriculum

All children in reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. This framework includes 7 areas of learning and development which interrelate and provide the basis for the children's learning:

Prime Areas
Personal, social and emotional development
Communication and Language
Physical development

Specific Areas
Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding of the world
Expressive arts and design

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Our expectation is that the majority of children reach the ELGs by the end of EYFS to ensure they have a firm foundation to enter Year 1. Play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best through activities which develop their curiosity, interests and that inspires them. The children are able to engage in activities using the characteristics of learning to challenge and extend their knowledge.

Characteristics of effective learning

The EYFS includes characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Activities are planned with these in mind to highlight the importance of the child's attitude to learning, being an active learner, and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

- Playing and exploring – children will have the opportunity to investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.
- Active learning – children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – we encourage and support children to have their own ideas, to make links between ideas and to develop strategies for achieving.

Planning and Observations

Teachers use the curriculum and the children's interests to plan exciting and challenging activities. The learning environment provides a key element of planning with enhancements being used to develop and extend the children's learning through play alongside the adult led activities. The planning is based on themes with some discrete teaching, for example in phonics. We provide a secure foundation for all children through planning for learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
Observations of the children playing in areas of provision help to inform the teacher's planning and the children's next steps for learning. Relevant and significant observations of child-initiated learning are recorded individually for children online via Tapestry. Parents are invited to view this online and to contribute observations from home.

Assessment

At Badger Hill Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. All assessment information is stored on Insight (the schools tracking system).

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:
Meeting expected levels of development
Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. Each year, the profile is moderated internally and

in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher and Early year's leader will:

- Monitor the implementation of the Early Years Policy and monitor teaching, learning and standards in the foundation stage
- Monitor the school's Foundation Stage progression and data
- Support teachers with planning and use of resources
- Undertake appropriate professional development to ensure up to date knowledge
- Lead staff professional development
- Manage the early years' team in the school
- With the Headteacher, Early Years leader and SENDCO, monitor teaching, learning and standards in the Foundation Stage
- Produce and action plan for the Foundation Stage, setting out the priorities which will be incorporated in any school improvement plan
- Carry out any risk assessments and follow health and safety guidelines

Teachers will:

- Follow the principles set out in this policy
- Plan opportunities to extend and challenge children
- Plan for differentiation so that all children develop as individuals. This includes SEND, higher ability children and those with any other additional needs.
- Promote curiosity, challenge and celebrate diversity within the classroom.
- Use ongoing daily assessment of the children via Tapestry/class dojos and adult led activities to inform planning and next steps.
- Ensure the appropriate time is given to maintain a suitable environment for learning.
- Report pupil's achievement in parents evenings and the annual reports to parents.
- Follow health and safety guidelines.

We follow statutory frameworks. There are four guiding principles which shape our practice. These are:

1. **Every child is a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships.**
3. 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. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. Children **develop and learn at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years' provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum encompasses seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. 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:

- 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

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 as well as embed key knowledge to support their future learning through school.

As previously outlined our curriculum incorporates learning through play, learning by adults modelling, by observing each other and through guiding 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. Weaving 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.

Parental involvement

We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the support of parents/carers. The school has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day. We also use an online learning journey which allows parents and staff to communicate on a regular basis. Teachers report pupils' progress to parents/carers termly.

Transition

Reception and year 1 teachers work together to ensure that each child's transition between the EYFS and year 1 is seamless. They make sure children's experiences in the final year of the EYFS are valuable in themselves, and prepare the ground for year 1.

Safeguarding, welfare and equality procedures

We promote good health, including good oral health, in the early years through following the SCARF scheme of work alongside additional visits and visitors. Equality for all is encouraged through developing a positive attitude towards people of the same and different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability. The rest of our procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy, equality policy, accessibility policy and SRE policy.

Monitoring

Regular monitoring of planning, teaching and progress occurs through the whole school appraisal system.

Policy reviewed by Deputy Head Teacher, July 2025

Next review July 2026