



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“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 Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five DFE 2021

GDPR

Data will be processed to be in line with the requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

Policy to be reviewed every 3 years
Reviewed by E Coates and V Indcox 17/11/2025
Reviewed by Governors: S Bentley 11/11/2025
Next review date: Autumn 2028

St. Bartholomew's C of E Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us full-time, at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five.

Introduction: Our Curriculum

For much of the time, children at St. Bartholomew's are engaged in exploration and play-based learning. This learning is well-resourced; through a carefully considered outdoor and indoor environment that enables children to follow their interests but also be challenged and supported to try new experiences. Children have significant choice and independence as they play. This supports their developing ability to co-operate, be aware, respect the people around them, become resilient in dealing with challenges, improve their communication skills, grow in independence and to self-regulate. All of which are part of our wider school C.A.R.E.S Code. Exploration and play-based learning can be child led or it can be guided by the practitioners in a playful way. Children need both options.

When accessing free-choice learning, children are well-supported by experienced staff; practitioners are mindful of the children's next steps and guide children towards them. Practitioners have a key role in supporting this learning by tuning into the children and developing conversations with them. Practitioners gently challenge children's thinking. They provide suggestions and resources over time which in turn, provides challenge. They use new vocabulary naturally and repeatedly, so children use and learn those words. [This is carefully planned within our English lessons and children are taught new vocabulary weekly.](#) As practitioners interact with the children, they are reflecting on how their interactions can support further learning. Everything is underpinned by support for children's confidence and emotional well-being. This is all crucial for the children. But we are aware that this is not enough,

Children also need adult-guided learning and direct teaching to learn new skills and concepts. We provide this through direct teaching during carpet time sessions, through 1:1 reading, Adult-directed writing tasks as well as 'Learning Challenges' (enhanced provision tasks) that are planned for the children to access independently when they are ready to do so.

That's why curriculum is important in the early years. By 'curriculum' we mean: all the things that we want children to know, experience and be able to do. Through our curriculum we want all of our children to flourish in both their learning and in their spirituality.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all of our children. We meet the needs of all our children through:

- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning styles;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
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- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;

giving the children an opportunity to shape their own learning through listening to their voices and allowing this to influence what we teach.

- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

We maintain high expectations in all aspects of learning. The goals we set are ambitious. They provide an overview of many of the different things we would like children to know and be able to do. The goals are adaptable to the particular children on roll. We offer scaffolding and extra support to help every child to access the curriculum and to ensure they make progress through it. Practitioners sensitively reduce their support so that children become more independent in their learning. We recognise that every child will not make the same progress through the curricular goals.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning. All of which are considered when we are planning our enhanced provision.

Three Prime areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional development (Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships)
- Communication and Language (Listening, Attention & Understanding and Speaking)
- Physical development (Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills)

Four Specific areas:

- Literacy (Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing)
- Mathematics (Number and Numerical Patterns)
- Understanding the World (Past & Present, People, Culture & Communities and The Natural World)
- Expressive Arts and Design (Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive)

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Learning at St. Bartholomew's

At St. Bartholomew's School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

- Learning is play-based and takes place indoors and outside.
- There is a balance between adult-initiated experiences (guided learning) and child-initiated experiences.
- Adults take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, seeing each child as a competent learner.
- Parent involvement is crucial. We learn a great deal about each child from their parents. Parental support and a high-quality home learning environment make a huge difference to children.

We have adopted the definition of learning as a change in long-term memory. If a child can't remember and retrieve what they have learnt, then they haven't learnt it at all. It's important that a child's learning is secure before moving onto new concepts or skills. Secure learning is more important than covering lots of things superficially. We have adopted the definition of progress as 'knowing more and remembering more', not moving from one 'age band' to the next in a tracker.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS follows Long-Term and Medium-Term Plans, which are based around half termly themes, both of which are working documents that are adapted regularly in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. An 'in the moment' approach is also used for planning enhancements as practitioners extend learning which they are listening into.

We are not driven by assessment and tracking.

Assessment serves children's learning and our curriculum. Most assessment is formative, so that it quickly helps us to make a difference to children's learning. However, we also need to have an overview of children's progress, so that we can take further actions and plan intervention where needed. Our aim is for the system to be proportionate, and to ensure it is not overly burdensome. This is why we use a tracking document that outlines 'areas of concern' which is updated 4 times throughout the year and includes notes considering development, curriculum and well-being based. This document is focused around support that we have/are putting into place to support the children and their learning. We also complete 'Pupil Progress Meetings' during which each child is discussed as well as groups of children that need further support, such as the lowest 20% of readers.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in zoned learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. All EYFS classes have access to outdoor learning areas. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We provide high quality resources for the children to access outdoors that help them to develop in all seven areas of learning.

Positive Relationships - Parents and Carers as Partners

At St. Bartholomew's we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children.

We do this through:

- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Foundation Stage classes and using an online learning journey (Tapestry) for parents to access and contribute to.
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are two formal meetings for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. . Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Well done assemblies, Sports Day etc;

inviting parents to come and read weekly with our children as a mystery reader.

Holding special events within school for parents to attend such as a craft day.

The key purposes of Tapestry are:

- to promote the partnership with parents in support of children's learning. This involves us finding out about significant learning at home, and us sharing significant learning with families.
- to support children to reflect on their own learning, using the child login.

We do not use Tapestry to create a comprehensive overview of everything a child has learnt.

Home Visits

The key purpose of the home visit is to establish a respectful partnership with the parents and a strong relationship with the child. During the home visit and settling-in period, the teacher asks parents to share information about their child's interests, communication,

confidence and physical health. We will use any information taken from this visit to inform planning of our provision to meet the interests of the children.

Transition

We understand the importance of providing a transition from Nursery or Pre-School into the reception year that allows for children to settle quickly into their learning and feel comfortable, safe and confident in their new setting.

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Safeguarding Children Policy).

We use the following process to support this transition, starting at the point that school places are allocated in April:

- conversations had with Nurseries and Pre-Schools and reading end of year reports from them;
- a parent/carer meeting to inform parents about the process of starting school;
- parents/carers are asked to complete a 'Positive Learning Partnership' Booklet to allow us to get to know their child;
- visits are (or contact is) made to nurseries and pre-schools by practitioners;
- transition mornings are planned for children to meet their key practitioners;
- we offer to visit children in their home setting during the first 2 weeks of school;
- a gradual (part-time) start to school is planned;
- parents/carers are invited into school for brunch to experience school dinners with their child;
- early parent/carer evening in the Autumn Term to discuss how the children have settled.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children and families, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS class teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in their class, supported by a Learning Support Assistant or Nursery Nurse.

Inclusion

We have an inclusive curriculum. Every child can access our curriculum, with extra help when needed. We call this help 'scaffolding' and we aim to 'scaffold up' to our inclusive curriculum rather than give children with SEND a watered-down, differentiated curriculum.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St. Bartholomew's are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our

school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to 'give their best'. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

Although exceeding is no longer an assessed part of the Early Learning Goals, the way we organise our environment, interact with the children and set our challenges means that we are able to identify and extend children that are gifted and talented. This can be through our physical and creative provision and in writing through the use of 'Drawing club'. When accessing the learning challenges or in adult directed tasks we further challenge children in relation to a task and by questioning and encouraging reasoning skills.

We also offer further support, for those who need it by extra 1:1 or group intervention or a pre-teach in an area that they need further support.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

For children with SEND, precise assessment needs to focus on what the child can do, and what the barriers to their learning are. We work alongside the SENDCo to ensure if a child has specific difficulties with their communication, for example, they may need to have aids like a core vocabulary board so that they can make choices and share their ideas. All children are entitled to the whole of the early years curriculum. Of course, they won't all manage to do and know everything that's mapped out: but some who appear vulnerable at first may thrive later in the year.

Rather than 'differentiating down', we believe that 'scaffolding up' is a more suitable approach in our commitment to inclusion. By 'scaffolding up', children with SEND are exposed to the concepts and skills in our wider curriculum in a suitable breadth and depth. Whereas 'differentiating down' suggests that children with SEND have limited access to the curriculum. Our commitment to 'scaffolding up' means that children are included in the wider curriculum and are not segregated from their peers.