

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Bythams Primary School



**Reviewed and updated:** Jan 2025

**Next review:** Jan 2027

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

**Our practice is underpinned by the key messages from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.**

*“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).

## **Introduction**

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at the Bythams Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term ‘setting’ refers to the Early Years educational provision at The Bythams Primary School. This is available to children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. These children are in the final year of the EYFS. This is referred to as the Reception Year; these children are in Squirrels Class.

In the policy the term ‘practitioner’ refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

## **Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

In the EYFS Squirrels class at Bythams Primary School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development. Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.

- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage framework**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At the Bythams Primary School we are committed to underpinning our provision with the key principles and themes from the Early Years Foundation Stage. A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments Learning and Development.

### **A Unique Child**

At the Bythams Primary School we value support and plan for each child as an individual and this is reflected through our provision and practice.

### **The characteristics of effective learning**

The characteristics of effective learning support the child to become a motivated and effective learner.

Children will **play and explore** and 'have a go' at using all available resources; developing their experiences.

Children will develop resilience and enjoy achievements through **active learning** and will make links, explore their ideas and strategies for problem solving through **creating and thinking critically**.

Practitioners support the children in developing all these characteristics through playing alongside children and, where necessary, scaffolding and supporting their thoughts.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, gender or abilities. We welcome all children and families into our settings so that they feel included, safe and valued.

It is important to us that all children at The Bythams Primary 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 to develop these important life skills. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards, both within school and in the wider environment. This is encouraged throughout our practice and our forest school experiences. We encourage a healthy lifestyle including taking exercise and eating healthy food. We use the free and milk fruit scheme. Children are encouraged to select their fruit and milk independently.

### **Positive Relationships**

We aim to promote positive relationships between staff, parents and children. Children are taught how to deal with difficult situations and relationships through the PSHE curriculum, our school uses the 'Jigsaw' scheme to support this. As well as through their daily interactions with adults and other children. We recognise that parents are the child's first educators and their importance for the child's welfare and education is paramount.

All children are greeted as they come into the classroom and have a familiar routine. Staff will work with each child either on a one to one basis, in a small group or as part of a larger group. They are able to build up confidence, rapport and respect with each child so that the children feel safe, happy and enjoy their time at the Bythams Primary School.

### **Environment**

In EYFS setting at The Bythams Primary we recognise the importance of a rich learning environment both inside and outside. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The environment is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. There is an early year's garden which is organised to support children's large motor skills and learn about the natural world outside.

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 the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. As far as possible we offer the same opportunities and areas of learning in all of our environments and the children have free flow between different areas. We observe the children during CIL (child initiated learning) and offer additional resources and support to enrich their learning based on observation and assessment.

To ensure that we meet the individual needs of all of our children we make regular observations of the children's interactions, interests, skills, and development of concepts. These observations are used to inform our planning for groups of children, for individuals and our provision for resources as appropriate.

### **Learning and Development**

There are seven areas of Learning and Development which are inter-connected.

**Three areas (the prime areas) are crucial to develop lifelong learning and to help children form relationships:**

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – children develop confidence and self-esteem, learn how to manage feelings and respect others.
- Communication and Language – children have opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and experience a rich language environment.
- Physical Development – children have opportunities to be active and develop coordination (both gross motor and fine motor); they learn about healthy choices.
- **The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:**
  - Literacy – involves children learning how letters link to the sounds and begin to read and write.
  - Mathematics – children have opportunities to develop counting and calculation skills, to use numbers in everyday activities and recognise and describe shapes and measures.

- Understanding of the World – children have opportunities to find out about people and communities, the environment and technology.
- Expressive Arts and Design – involves exploring feelings and ideas through music, dance, role play and design.

### **Active Learning through Play**

At The Bythams Primary School we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play. We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development.

Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at the Bythams Primary School practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within our setting.

### **Assessment and Record Keeping**

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at the Bythams Primary School. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual

needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining and filing their assessment data.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (informally and not always recorded). Practitioners observe and record special moments or 'wow' moments on the online journal Tapestry. Tapestry is an online learning journey which parents will be able to access and contribute to via the internet. All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use recorded and informal observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play and 1:1 assessments.

Baseline assessment is carried out using the EYFS Profile during the children's first six weeks upon entering the setting; this is based on information from feeder settings, parental knowledge and initial observations of the children.

Tracking of each child's progress and development against the Early Years Outcomes takes place on a termly basis using insight in line with the rest of the school. At the end of the year a summative assessment is completed and submitted to county against the Early Learning Goals, using the national exemplification materials; (The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile assessment).

Judgments made on children's development throughout the year are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour predominantly demonstrated independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development

### **Planning**

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Medium term planning is created with all early years' practitioners'

involvement and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities indoors and outdoors. We value all areas of learning and development and understand that they are inter connected.

Children and parents are encouraged to be involved in the next steps for learning through the children's learning journals and parent consultations.

Child-initiated learning is an important part of our daily routine at The Bythams Primary School and adult-directed activities are play based, active and related to the children's interests. We aim to help children with their learning through observing, getting involved in their play, supporting their thinking and asking open questions.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom. As well as our trips to the forest and outdoor cooking experiences.

### **Parents as Partners**

At the Bythams Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development.

So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents. We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through informal chats at the end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). Tapestry is also used as a two-way system where parents can upload children's achievements at home.

This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular newsletters letters, emails, school website, reading records through an online reading app, home school books, tapestry and

informal chatting at the end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

This policy is due for review in 2027, or when any changes to the EYFS take place.