



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

The status of the policy:	Final
Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to outline how the Early Years Foundation Stage will be implemented at Birch Hill
Consultation:	Staff and Governors
Links with other policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching, Learning & Assessment• Whole school vision statement• Equality of Opportunity• SEND• Home Learning Policy• Behaviour & Anti Bullying
Monitoring and evaluation:	EYFS Leader, School Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Local Authority Advisors (STEPS)
Date established by governing body:	12 th July 2021
Date for full implementation:	1 st September 2021
Date for review:	September 2024

“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.”

(‘The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ September 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception year. At Birch Hill Primary School children can attend the Nursery from the term after their third birthday and start Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A unique child

At Birch Hill Primary School, children are at the centre of everything that we do. We appreciate that every child is unique and that this is something to be celebrated. We understand that every child will develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

We have 4 Golden Rules and believe that every child has rights and responsibilities regardless of their age, gender, religion, race or disabilities. This is introduced and embedded from when they enter our Nursery and diversity is greatly celebrated throughout the whole school. All children and their families are valued and we strive to build a close partnership with our parents and carers in order to provide the very best for our children.

At Birch Hill Primary School, every child has the opportunity and is encouraged to become the best that they can be. We understand that every child has the right to an education and we are a very inclusive school. We plan accordingly to meet the needs of every child in our setting including those who are more able, those with Special Educational Needs, those with varying backgrounds and previous life experiences, those with disabilities, those with different ethnic backgrounds and those with English as an additional language.

In Early Years, we embrace and enhance every child’s personalities, strengths and abilities. We ensure this by:

- Planning opportunities and challenging activities 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 needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;

- Offering a safe and supporting learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and to enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

“It is important for parents and early year’s settings to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in the early years. This includes listening regularly to parents and giving parents clear information about their children’s progress. It is important to encourage all parents to chat, play and read with their children”
(Development Matters – September 2020).

At Birch Hill Primary School, building positive relationships with the children (as well as their families) is our priority. We understand that positive relationships in a child's life will help to shape who they become and will encourage them to reach their full potential. We pride ourselves in building excellent relationships with children and their families. We do this by:

- Providing an induction meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have;
- Inviting parents/carers to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics and reading or communication and language;
- Providing extra visits and a photo book for children with particular needs to that they are more familiar with their new environment;
- Providing lots of opportunities for interactions between children and their teachers about their interests and things that are important to them;
- Sharing regularly the children's 'Learning Journey' through Tapestry and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers;
- Publishing a topic map detailing the areas of learning and overarching theme of the term or half-term;
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the academic year in Nursery and Reception;
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers;
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as Christmas productions and Sports Day;
- Providing smaller key person groups in Nursery, so that as well as the teacher, every child has a key person adult;
- Although the class teacher is every child's key person in Reception, every member of staff strives to build excellent relationships with children.
- Providing a meet and greet between parents/carers and teachers held before the beginning of the new school year.

Enabling Environment

“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.”

(‘The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ September 2021)

At Birch Hill we recognise that the term ‘enabling environment’ does not only refer to the space we offer but the atmosphere we create for the children. We understand that children learn best through experiences and quality interactions. The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. Children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up with planned continuous provision.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. All of our EYFS staff have a good understanding of each individual child’s abilities and constantly aim to continuously move their learning forward.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual’s interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with labelled, readily available resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is organised to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning and, very importantly, to foster the children’s developing independence. Although many activities are cross curricular, the classrooms have distinct areas for writing/mark-making, maths, creative activities, role play, construction and small world, a book corner and carpeted teaching area as well as their own outdoor area space. Each day a variety of activities are planned and set up in the different areas.

Learning and Development

At Birch Hill Primary School we believe that children learn best through real life experiences and topics that capture their interests. We therefore plan a new topic every few weeks and provide the children with valuable experiences such as having visitors in to speak to them, visits from animals, trips out into the local environment and a wide range of exciting activities for them to experience. This encourage our children to remain stimulated and enthusiastic about their learning. Some activities provided will be child initiated, whilst others will be adult focussed tasks. It is important to us to get this balance just right.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early year's settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels require at the end of EYFS. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, for relationships and thrive.

The three prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

The specific areas are:

- Mathematical Development
- Literacy Development
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

There are 3 main characteristics of learning which identify how children learn. These are:

- 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.

Although expectations of adult led tasks and whole class carpet sessions slightly differ between Nursery and Reception, we work hard to build this up throughout the year, so that Nursery children are ready to complete more adult focussed tasks and carpet sessions by the time they enter Reception.

In the summer term of Nursery, the class teacher will introduce the first set of Phonic Sounds following the Floppy's Phonics scheme. Reception pupils, will participate in a daily phonics session, following Floppy's Phonics, in-line with the school phonics policy. Nursery and Reception follow a Talk for Writing and Maths sequence.

Nursery Talk for Writing Cycle (from Autumn 2):

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Introduce the story to children. Read the story.	Re-read the story Build the text map with the children, for one sentence/phrase/page.	Re-read the story and Tell the children the author /read the blurb/point out the books features	Re-read the story Build the text map with the children, for one sentence/phrase/page (same text map as Day 2).

Reception Talk for Writing Imitation cycle using the Retrieve, Interpret and Predict questioning cycle:

One week cycle (autumn and spring terms):

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Introduce the story to children. Tell the children the author/illustrator/read the blurb Repeat key phrases.	Read the story – explain key vocabulary. Act out a sentence from the book (this sentence will form the text map)	Re-read the story Ask a retrieve question Build the text map with the children.	Re-read the story Ask an interpret question. Children write to go with the text map.	Re-read the story Ask a predict question Children make changes to the text map and writing.

In a two week cycle (Spring 2 and Summer Term)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week One:	Introduce the story to children. Tell the children the author/illustrator/read the blurb Repeat key phrases.	Read the story – explain key vocabulary. Act out a sentence from the book	Re-read the story Ask a retrieve question Build the text map with the children.	Re-read the story Ask an interpret question. Children write to go with the text map.	Re-read the story Ask a predict question Children make changes to the text map and writing.
Week Two:	Recap the beginning, middle and end of the story to children, then re-read the story. Review one vocabulary word from the story Purpose: for children to recall the meaning	Re-read the story Review one vocabulary word from the story Purpose: for children to	Re-read the story Review one vocabulary word from the story Purpose: for children to recall the	Re-read the story Review one vocabulary word from the story Purpose: for children to recall the	Re-read the story – aim for the children to tell the story aloud as a class Play agree or not with the focus words from this week.

	of a Tier Two word within the context of the story.	recall the meaning of a Tier Two word within the context of the story Learn to say and act out the focus sentence.	meaning of a Tier Two word within the context of the story Build the text map (sentence the chn learnt to say yesterday). Learn how to read the sentence in pictures.	meaning of a Tier Two word within the context of the story Using the text map to write the sentence.	Talk about words you can change in the text map. Children use yesterday's text map, but re-write it with a new ending/item.
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At Birch Hill we teach Mathematics following a three week cycle in EYFS which gradually deepens the children's understanding of number and numerical pattern. The three week teaching cycle begins after 1, 2, 3 has been taught in its simplest form.

Nursery Learning Objectives to 5.					
Week 1	To count to... and represent Using sound	Count out x amount of objects from a small group	Recognise the digit	Matching numerals to quantity	Identifying and name the linked 2D shape
Week 2	Count out x amount of objects from a larger group	Count out x amount of objects of varying sizes	To place x objects into a five frame	To compare sizes: weight and height	Notice and continue pattern with the linked 2D shape
Week 3	To subitise numbers to ... perceptual	To subitise numbers to ... conceptual	To select and sort linked 2D shapes	Explore creating patterns with the linked 2D shape	To use the language associated with the = symbol

Reception Learning Objectives to 10.					
Week 1	To count to... and represent ... using sound	Recognise the digit and ordering numbers to...	Matching numerals to quantity	Subitise numbers to ...	Identifying the properties of linked 2D shape

Week 2	To explore ways of making	To use ordinal language	To use comparative language for height/length/weight	Recognise that ...p can be made by combining other coins	Explore pattern with the linked 2D shape
Week 3	To use the = symbol	To understand the concept of 1 more / 1 less	To learn the different ways to compose/decompose numbers to ...	To use the + symbol	To use the - symbol

Visits and Visitors

At Birch Hill Primary School, we believe that pupils benefit enormously from taking part in educational visits and visitors to the school. Visitors can really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a doctor of example from Nursery. We aim to build up to a day-trip in Reception, where we will actively seek parental support on the trip, aiming for a ratio for one adult to four children in Reception.

Assessment

Throughout 'continuous provision' observation forms a fundamental aspect of the pedagogy of EYFS at Birch Hill Primary School.

'Young children demonstrate language, mathematics, science, creativity, physicality – sometimes all within one activity – and the task of the practitioner is to make sense of what is seen, to recognise any significant steps in learning that may have taken place and to identify here help and support are needed to make further progress'

(Effective Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage – Jan Dubiel 2016)

Observation and responding to children's thinking inform our planning of experiences and opportunities, how we create our environment for thinking, the strategies the adults use to extend learning (modelling, scaffolding, questioning, discussion, shared sustained thinking) and how we capitalise knowledge of children's interests to ensure high levels of engagement.

At Birch Hill we use Tapestry to record pupil observations, whether it is child initiated or adult led. A continuous cycle of observation, assessment and planning is embedded throughout our EYFS provision.



(Birth to Five Matters, 2021)

In addition to the continuous cycle of observation and formative assessment which informs each child's next steps, summative assessments are carried out for phonic development (in-line with Phonics policy), the stable order principle in number and an assessment of each child's stage of development for each of the seven areas of learning. These inform planning and subsequent teaching and learning. At the end of their Reception Year, the class teacher assess each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) noting whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging' or 'expected', as well as commenting on their progress within the Characteristics of Effective Learning. This is judged through a wide range of evidence taken from their child initiated and adult led activities. A formal report is then written by the teachers at the end of the year to inform parents and carers of the judgements their child achieved.

Baseline Assessment

Within the first half term of their year in Nursery and Reception, our staff will observe and interact with the children as much as possible, enabling us to gain a sense of their knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities. We appreciate that this will differ from child to child in terms of how they learn best and what they already know. This un-invasive assessment allows us to the plan an inclusive and accessible environment, relevant to the group of children that we have. We will also use this data to plan future learning and experiences for the children. The baseline assessment will be referred to on a termly basis in order to assess children's progress. By doing this we are able to identify individual, group and class needs. This ensures that all children continue to make progress throughout the year. We continue to assess children's learning on a daily basis in EYFS through observations of the children, high quality interactions and small group or individual adult led tasks.

Transitions

At Birch Hill Primary School, we understand that transitioning from Pre-school, child minders or home into Nursery is a big deal for both the children and their families. We aim to make this transition as smooth as possible by offering children pre visits with their parents/carers to give them the chance to become familiar with their new environment in the 'safety' of their parents/carers presence. Before the beginning of the year, we also invite parents to attend a meeting where they can meet their children's new teacher and attend a brief presentation, where basic information will be provided. A welcome pack is also provided for all parents with this key information in it. Should the teacher and parent/carer feel that particular children would benefit from having a staggered entry into Nursery then this can be arranged. We also offer the 30 hours funded care and this can be used flexibly depending on the children's and their families' needs.

We place equal importance on the transition from EYFS into KS1. To ensure children are ready for this, we continue to build up their independence when completing adult-led tasks and these will become more frequent towards the end of Reception year. At the end of the Reception year, children will again experience 2 sessions with their new teacher, in their new classroom. In all transitions to new teachers, teachers will hold a hand-over meeting to ensure all knowledge of the children is passed on appropriately.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring is the responsibility of the head teacher, governor and the EYFS Leader. Consistency is important in all aspects of school life. This policy sets out clear expectations that support children's learning. It should be followed as consistently as possible.

The purpose of monitoring teaching and learning is to evaluate strengths, identify areas for development and further improve the quality of what we do. Some of this might be through the Performance Management process and at other times it might be as part of our ongoing cycle of self-evaluation linked to the School Development Plan (SDP).

The quality of teaching and learning in EYFS (as across the whole school) is monitored in a number of different ways. This may be through lesson observations, Learning Walks, scrutiny of planning and children's work/books and interviewing children.

We use the Ofsted criteria as a benchmark to evaluate standards of teaching and learning.