



Early Years Foundation Stage policy September 2024

1. Aims and Objectives

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Early Years Education is a crucial stage in itself and not just the preparation for the next stage. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of Early Years Education at Burton End Primary Academy.

In this policy, Early Years Education refers to the children in the Foundation Stage; this includes children from Nursery through to the end of the Reception year.

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish the foundations ensuring they are school ready.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop their independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the continuous development of social skills, such as co-operation, sharing and engaging in conversation.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

2. Our Approach

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the Early Years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood helps provide the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework for children's development from birth to the end of the Reception year. There are four overarching principles. These are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and developing, and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- 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 Early Years practitioners and parents and/or carers.

- The importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of ALL children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

(EYFS Framework, DfE, 2023)

These four principles form the practice of all Early Years staff. This helps ensure that staff provide the very best possible support for the development, learning and care of each individual child within the Foundation Stage at Burton End Primary Academy.

3. The Early Years Intent

Our Early Years Intent is:

All children will receive support to develop knowledge and learning foundations through a highly ambitious curriculum provided by Unity Schools Partnership, **CUSP Early Foundations**. It focuses on the **holistic development** of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a **solid and broad foundation** for lifelong learning and well-being. This curriculum is presented in three parts:

- **Foundational Knowledge** - What children should know and be able to do throughout the EYFS and how this will support their development and prepare them for success in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- **Opportunities and Experiences** - How this foundational knowledge can be learnt through play and through guided activities that will allow children to explore, experiment with and think hard about new and important concepts.
- **Structured Story Time** - Carefully selected core texts that will introduce key language, ideas and themes that children will need to access the foundational knowledge, built into a framework that uses effective literacy instruction.

(CUSP Early Foundations, 2023)

4. Teaching and Learning

The EYFS Curriculum is organised into **seven areas of learning and development**. These seven areas shape education programmes in all early years settings. All are important and inter-connected:

Prime Areas:

- **Communication and Language**

Listening, Attention and Understanding

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Self-Regulation

Managing Self

Building Relationships

- **Physical Development**

Gross Motor Skills

Fine Motor Skills

Specific Areas:

- **Literacy**

Comprehension

Word Reading

Writing

- **Mathematics**

Number

Numerical Patterns

- **Understanding the World**

Past and Present

People, Culture and Communities

The Natural World

- **Expressive Arts & Design**

Creating with Materials

Being Imaginative and Expressive

(Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2023)

Staff ignite children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning through carefully selected resources, topics and planned opportunities. The curriculum is thematically mapped and meaningfully diverse to ensure a broad range of topics are covered with a planned literacy spine at its core. The curriculum is designed to ensure children build on the progress they have made in nursery and are prepared for success in Year 1 and beyond.

Children learn at different speeds and in a variety of different ways so a wide range of teaching strategies are employed within the classroom to ensure that all children make progress. We plan activities which inspire and engage the children in their learning. We plan opportunities for child-initiated and adult-led learning to take place. Classroom provision is carefully and thoughtfully planned to provide children with an opportunity to rehearse the skills and knowledge they have been taught. Staff support children through this rehearsal phase using **The ShREC Approach**.

The aim of The ShREC Approach is to provide Early Years professionals with a simple and memorable set of evidence-informed strategies that can be embedded into everyday practice:

- **Share attention** - staff show genuine interest in what children are doing to establish a connection, coming down to their level and engaging in their choice of activity. Staff pay attention to what children are looking at, doing and saying. This motivates children to communicate.

- **Respond** - staff notice how children communicate. They respond with eye contact, gestures, expressions, narration, comments and making links with previous learning/experiences.

- **Expand** - Staff model and scaffold children's learning and pitch language appropriately, expanding on what children are saying by repeating what they have said, re-modelling and building on their vocabulary. This helps children use more complex sentences.
- **Conversation** - Sustained back and forth conversations that involve many turns are the goal, helping children to cue turn-taking when speaking to others. Staff ask open ended questions which encourage children to elaborate. Staff sensitively challenge children, shaping conversation and encouraging children to think deeper and harder.

(Preparing for Literacy Guidance Report, 2018, Education Endowment Foundation)

Children are carefully observed and monitored from their first day at Burton End Primary Academy so that each child's individual needs are fully met. Staff work with the SENDCo to ensure children with SEND have their needs met through quality first teaching and targeted support.

5. Assessments

Within the first 6 weeks of **starting reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the **EYFS Profile (EYFSP)** 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/carers. Results of the profile are shared with parents/carers. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the **Development Matters** Guidance) in partnership with other schools within the Unity Schools Partnership schools to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority.

A range of assessments are carried out throughout the year. These include **formative assessments**, which are carried out on a daily basis, and **summative judgements** which are carried out termly. Children are assessed through observations in order to obtain a Baseline (On Entry) Assessment. Teachers share learning via ClassDojo in the form of a class 'story'. A child's 'WOW Moments' can be shared with their parents/carers via their individual ClassDojo portfolio.

Each Early Years class keeps up-to-date 'Floor Books'. These include learning from each week through the eyes of the child - photos, comments, examples of children's work and examples of their learning on topics linked to **CUSP Knowledge Notes**.

Staff use assessments to plan interventions or identify children who need further practice.

Activities are planned with regard to three Characteristics of Effective Learning detailed in the EYFS:

- **Playing & Exploring** - children investigate and experience things
- **Active Learning** - children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements

- **Creating & Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Sitting neatly alongside the Characteristics of Effective Learning are Burton End Primary Academy's values - **Kindness, Respect, Resilience, and Ambition**. The school values are a list of positive characteristics aimed at improving behaviour, conduct and self-confidence. They underpin all our thoughts and actions. In Early Years, children learn these values and they are celebrated with positive praise, house points, and certificates awarded at weekly Celebration Assemblies.

A **daily routine** is crucial for children's learning and development, helping to create a sense of security and safety. Children are introduced to these routines from their very first visit to the classroom.

Staff apply a sensitive and consistent approach to behaviour, in line with Burton End Primary Academy's Behaviour Policy, to ensure that all children are safe, happy and able to learn.

6. The Learning Environment

Well-planned, purposeful play, indoors and outdoors, is the foundation of development and learning for young children. Children learn by watching others, talking, asking questions, listening, exploring and investigating. Learning through play is both enjoyable and challenging and helps children to develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

Our learning environments, in both Nursery and Reception, provide opportunities for children to access all seven areas of learning. The learning environment contains carefully selected, developmentally appropriate resources which are constantly available. These are enhanced with topic-related resources. Activities and experiences within the environment are meticulously planned to offer the children opportunities to practice what has been taught within our CUSP Early Foundations curriculum, supported by visual '**knowledge notes**' and engaged, supportive adults. Large-scale knowledge notes focus children on key vocabulary. They are a simple, physical cue for children to refer to and transfer direct, explicit teaching into the provision. Adults instruct children on how to use knowledge notes to find information and vocabulary. They are also displayed in large floor books, surrounded by children's work, questions and comments.

Children in all Early Years classes have direct, free-flow access to outdoor areas. There are many benefits to outdoor play. It improves motor development and exposes children to Vitamin D making them healthy and strong. It promotes curiosity, critical thinking and creativity leading to improved learning outcomes, enables children to take and manage risks, and improves mental health and behaviour. Children are able to learn without the restrictions of a normal classroom.

7. The Role of Adults in the Foundation Stage

We follow the EYFS Statutory Framework (2023) for our staffing ratios. Each class has a qualified teacher and at least one member of support staff.

The Class Teacher is responsible for the long-term planning, but the Class Teacher and the Teaching Assistant(s) work together to talk about children's achievements and planning. It is important that all staff

are aware of where the children are, in terms of their learning and development, and what their next steps are.

All members of the Foundation Stage team have a responsibility for observing and reflecting on the children's spontaneous learning through play, applying the aforementioned 'ShREC Approach' at every available opportunity. These observations are shared and used to inform planning to ensure all children's developmental needs are being met and that activities planned are appropriate for the individual needs of each child.

8. Liaison Within the School

The Nursery and Reception teachers work closely together to make sure there is a smooth transition between part-time and full-time school. Nursery children have the opportunity to visit the playgrounds and classrooms of their reception classes, as well as other main areas of the school so that they become well acquainted with them. They will also have plenty of opportunities to meet their new teachers. Reception teachers also work closely with Year 1 teachers to ensure a smooth transition to Key Stage 1.

The Reception children begin attending two assemblies in the hall each week from the Spring Term - EYFS/KS1 Picture Book assembly and Celebration Assembly.

9. Parents as Partners

We recognise that parental influences are vitally important throughout childhood. Parents guide, encourage and teach their children first and foremost. Research has shown that regular parental involvement in a child's schooling is the most important factor in the success of the child's educational achievements in adolescence. We encourage parents to play an active role in their child's schooling. To this end, we work hard to forge strong home-school links. The settling-in process plays a key role in this but it does not end there.

To enable parents to work effectively in partnership with the school we:

- Have an open-door policy, ensuring that staff are accessible both at the beginning and end of each day so that parents/carers can chat and share information. Mutually convenient appointments can also be made to meet with staff in a more formal context if necessary.
- Encourage parents to participate in, wherever possible, their child's school life through a) regular reading at home, b) attending parent workshops, c) coming to organised 'stay-and-play' sessions and d) completing simple home learning tasks.
- Keep parents up-to-date with children's learning through observations and messages sent via ClassDojo.
- Encourage parents to make observations at home and upload them to their child's ClassDojo portfolio, such as family days out and achievements at home.
- Provide termly feedback on children's progress through two parent consultations and an end-of-year report.

10. The Settling-In Process

In the Summer Term, an Open Evening meeting is held for the parents of those children starting Reception in the September. This meeting enables the parents to meet their child's new teacher and other key members of staff, ask questions, look around the school, their child's new classroom and find out a little more about the Early Years curriculum. This meeting takes place before the children are invited for their induction visits. Reception children are invited to two induction sessions towards the end of the Summer term in preparation for them joining in September. These induction visits provide the children with the opportunity to explore their new classroom, their new school and it gives both the children and staff a chance to get to know each other a little better. In September, each Reception child is offered a Home-Visit, just before they start school, to provide parents with the opportunity to ask staff questions that they may have, and for the children to get to know staff within the familiarity of their home environment.