

Growing Together, Learning for Life



BANNOCKBURN
Primary School

**EARLY YEARS
FOUNDATION STAGE
POLICY**

Date of Review:	September 2024
Date of Next Review:	September 2026

Our Vision

Through a positive caring environment, Bannockburn Primary School provides the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential.

Within this document, the term Early Years is used to describe children within Nursery and Reception.

“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, Department for Education, March 2017

Our EYFS curriculum provides every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. Nursery and Reception are unique in that they can set the tone for later school life.

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
4. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

This Early Years Foundation Stage Policy includes the following:

- Aims and Principles
- Planning and organising the curriculum
- Characteristics of effective learning
- The EYFS Learning Environment
- Classroom organisation and resources
- Observation, Assessment and Planning
- Learning Journals
- Half-termly expectations
- Involving parents/carers
- Transition

Aims and Principles

- EYFS practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- To provide a relevant curriculum with tasks that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children plan or initiate themselves. Practitioners must consider the individual needs and interests of each child, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- Practitioners acknowledge the holistic nature of young children’s learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the EYFS curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking and listening skills.
- Practitioners to create a learning environment that develops children’s imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- Practitioners to respond to each child emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction.

- To involve parents and carers.

Planning and organising the curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years forms the first stage of our Whole School Curriculum. It covers children in both Nursery and Reception Classes.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must provide a framework for planning, teaching and assessing in the Early Years setting. All areas of learning and development are inter-connected.

The three prime areas are:

1. **Communication and Language** – children will be given a variety of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.
2. **Physical Development** – children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will be taught the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
3. **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others; forming positive relationships and develop respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities.

There are also four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

1. **Literacy** – children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.
2. **Mathematics** – children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.
3. **Understanding the World** – Children will make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
4. **Expressive Arts and Design** – Children will explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS weaves the Characteristics of Effective Learning through the seven areas of the EYFS Curriculum. These are regularly assessed through observations and planned for throughout Nursery and Reception, where staff are continuously promoting the development of these skills.

The characteristics are as follows:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things and events around them and ‘have a go’ at activities.
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and persevere if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they set out to achieve when participating in an activity.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children **create** and develop their own ideas, make links between different experiences and develop strategies for choosing their own ways to do things.

The curriculum is planned through a series of themes that reflect and respond to the children’s interests, offering experiences in all areas of the curriculum and which carry equal importance to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for play and child - initiated activities.

The long term plan is the Foundation Stage Curriculum. This is an overarching framework that informs all other stages of planning. It shows the range of experiences and learning opportunities that are available while children are in the Early Years.

Medium term planning takes the form of a theme based approach of the children's interests and is a working document. It is evaluated weekly to respond to other emerging interests that the children may have and further developed to incorporate the children's interests.

Individual lesson plans inform activities and learning objectives from the Medium term Plan as deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children. Plans are extended and differentiated accordingly.

- Planning should provide a clear balance between challenging the most-able children in some cases to exceed Early Learning Goals, whilst recognising that an attempt to implement the more formal work before a child is ready could damage a child's disposition to learn.
- By the end of Reception, more structured Numeracy and Literacy lessons will be in place in preparation for children entering Year 1.

The EYFS Learning Environment

Bannockburn facilitates child-initiated play and provides children with carefully planned opportunities which allow children to explore, create and learn using interactive and accessible resources. The Early Years Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative and collaborative. Our Early Years Foundation Stage has its own outdoor areas and the free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. Outdoor learning offers opportunities for doing things in a variety of ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Children within EYFS have the opportunity of participating in Forest School. Forest School not only encourages and inspires children but also develops skills, interests and understanding through practical, hands-on experience.

Classroom Organisation and Resources

The organisation of the classroom reflects the importance that is placed on children learning through play and first-hand experience, developing independence and having opportunities to initiate their own activities.

Nursery and Reception classes provide the following areas:

- Small World tables for retelling stories
- Topical role-play area
- Large and small construction
- Sand and water
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Writing table with a range of writing resources
- Making area with access to a choice of natural and man-made resources
- Interactive smartboard
- Malleable materials
- Musical instruments
- Painting and creative equipment
- Mathematical games and equipment

Observation, Assessment and Planning

We recognise that effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. Our planning has a sharp focus on the children's needs, their interests and their stages of development. We recognise that the seven areas of learning cannot be delivered in isolation and seek opportunities to make links between them. We aim to deliver the curriculum through planned, purposeful play and present new concepts in meaningful contexts

that enable the children to build on what they already know. The main assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play.

Learning Journals

Learning Journals are evidence of a child's learning journey throughout the EYFS. Journals are divided into the seven areas: Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal Social and Emotional Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design.

Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, post-it notes and photographs) and are stored in individual Learning Journeys. All practitioners are involved in observing children and contribute to a child's individual Learning Journal. Practitioners use observations and summative assessment to support their developing knowledge of individual children. Learning Journals' observations are then evaluated and children's learning priorities are identified. Relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress. Within the final term of Nursery and Reception, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their child's development against the Early Learning Goals. This includes whether they have met or not met the Early Learning Goals and information about how their child displays the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

EYFS and SEND Pupils

Please refer to the school's SEND policy

Involving Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in the Early Years setting, the results have a positive impact on the child's development.

All staff involved with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children, regardless of gender, ethnicity, social-economic background or educational need.

A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to parents/carers during the new parent meetings to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information.
- Curriculum letters are sent home on a half-termly basis to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum with an outline of activities which could be undertaken at home to support this.
- Operating an "Open Door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, and also to view children's work.
- Sharing progress at school through annotated photographs and observations in the children's Learning Journals.
- Inviting parents/carers to accompany children on school visits.
- Discussing individual next steps and progress with parents/carers at the termly Parents' Evenings
- Parent Workshops with a variety of different focuses further encourages parents/carers to help their child at home

- Regular 'Stay and Play' sessions give parent/carers opportunities to learn alongside their children and encompass a range of learning focuses.
- Home visits are carried out within the first week of September in order to begin a reciprocal home-school relationship

Our partnership with parents means that they have the opportunity to work closely with our Early Years practitioners to support children's transition into the setting. We would like parents to feel secure in the knowledge that their child is well cared for and happy at school. Our parents are welcome to be actively involved in their children's learning in school and are able to share learning experiences through 'Stay and Play' sessions, soft starts, learning journeys, volunteering and parent workshops, parent forums and coffee mornings. Bannockburn values contributions to help support the judgements made about their children's development. We use this information to support our assessments and share information about what children need to do next to develop and thrive.

Transition

As our EYFS provision is based on two separate school sites, transition from Nursery to Reception is planned and managed to ensure all children feel confident and secure. Those children who join us in Nursery are given the opportunity to visit the Reception setting on the High Street site. These opportunities take place throughout the second half of the Summer Term. To ensure a smooth transition the Nursery children are accompanied by their familiar adults. Whilst visiting the Reception setting the children engage in a variety of activities, such as: structured play, outdoor learning and carpet time. Initially these visits are once a week, however, as we progress through the second half of the term these visits increase to two to three times a week. Moreover, parents/carers are invited to join their children on some of these visits.

For the children who join us in Reception from other Early Years settings and/or with no previous pre-schooling experience, both child and parent are invited to visit the Reception setting from June until their official start date in September. Children who did not attend Bannockburn Nursery will be visited in their family home environment. Home visits are integral part of the transition process and commence in the first week of September. Home visits consist of two EYFS practitioners visiting the family in order to lay the foundations for an effective home/school relationship.