

Bledlow Ridge School



Early Year Foundation Stage Policy

Date agreed: October 2025

Review date: October 2027

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the statutory standards that all Early Years providers must follow to ensure that every child learns and develops well while being kept healthy and safe. It underpins high-quality teaching and learning, supporting children to achieve 'school readiness' and to build the broad range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that form a secure foundation for future learning and success throughout school and life.

The EYFS framework applies to all children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

According to the Department for Education (2021), the EYFS aims to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all Early Years settings, ensuring every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
- A secure foundation through individualised planning, assessment, and regular review of each child's learning and development.
- Strong partnerships between practitioners, parents, and carers, recognising the vital role of families in supporting children's learning.
- Equality of opportunity and inclusive practice, ensuring that every child is valued, supported, and able to thrive.

The EYFS is built around four overarching principles that shape all Early Years practice:

1. A Unique Child – Every child is a unique individual who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Positive Relationships – Children learn to be strong and independent through secure, nurturing, and supportive relationships.
3. Enabling Environments – Children learn and develop best in environments that respond to their individual interests and needs, with skilled adults who extend their learning through rich experiences and strong partnerships with parents and carers.
4. Learning and Development – Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The EYFS covers the education and care of all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

(Department for Education, 2021)

Aims and Objectives of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS curriculum provides the foundation for all future learning by ensuring that every child has the best possible start in life. We aim to offer a rich, play-based and inclusive learning environment where children develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to thrive.

Our curriculum supports and promotes:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Helping children to form positive relationships, develop self-confidence, understand and manage their emotions, and show respect and empathy for others.
- Communication and Language
 - Encouraging children to become confident communicators by developing their listening,

attention, understanding, and speaking skills through meaningful interactions and high-quality conversations.

- **Physical Development**
 - Supporting children’s coordination, control, and movement through both fine and gross motor activities, while promoting healthy choices and self-care habits.
- **Literacy**
 - Developing a love of books, stories, and rhymes, building early reading skills through phonological awareness, and encouraging children to express themselves through mark-making and early writing.
- **Mathematics**
 - Building a strong foundation in number, counting, pattern, shape, space, and measure through practical, hands-on experiences that relate to everyday life.
- **Understanding the World**
 - Fostering curiosity about the world around them by exploring people, communities, cultures, technology, and the natural environment.
- **Expressive Arts and Design**
 - Inspiring creativity and imagination through art, music, movement, dance, role play, and design, encouraging children to express their thoughts and ideas in different ways.

Through these areas, we aim to:

- Nurture positive attitudes to learning and resilience in all children.
- Support each child’s unique developmental journey, recognising and valuing their individual interests, strengths, and needs.
- Provide stimulating experiences that promote exploration, problem-solving, and critical thinking.
- Ensure that children are safe, secure, and happy, developing a strong sense of belonging and well-being.

Learning & Teaching Style

At Bledlow Ridge School, our approach to Early Years learning and teaching is rooted in understanding, care, nurture and curiosity. We believe that every child is unique and capable, and we nurture their development through rich, engaging experiences that inspire a lifelong love of learning.

Key features of effective EYFS Learning and Teaching at Bledlow Ridge School:

- **Understanding and respect for child development:** Our teachers have a deep understanding of how young children grow, learn, and thrive, and this knowledge shapes every aspect of our teaching.
- **A variety of learning experiences:** We use a wide range of approaches that offer first-hand experiences, clear explanations, and thoughtful interventions to extend and enrich each child’s play, communication, and curiosity.
- **Carefully planned curriculum and provision:** Our curriculum and continuous provision are designed to help every child work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

- Opportunities for growth: Through both enhanced and continuous provision, children are encouraged to explore activities that build on their interests and support their intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development.
- Encouragement of independence and communication: We nurture confident learners who talk about their ideas, share their experiences, and develop independence and self-management skills.
- Supportive learning environments: Our indoor and outdoor spaces are thoughtfully organised, ensuring children have access to safe, stimulating, and well-resourced areas that promote active learning.
- Observation and partnership with families: We regularly observe and assess each child's progress to inform next steps in learning, sharing these insights with parents and carers through daily feedback and our class app, *Seesaw*.
- Strong connections with other settings: We maintain positive relationships with previous educational settings to ensure smooth transitions and continuity in learning.
- Commitment to reflection and improvement: Our team regularly reviews and evaluates our practice to ensure the highest quality of education and care.
- Partnership with parents and carers: We value close collaboration with families, helping children to feel secure, happy, and proud of their achievements.
- Continuous professional development: We actively identify and support the training needs of all adults within the Foundation Stage to sustain high-quality teaching and care.

Learning through Play in EYFS

Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world around them. Play allows them to practice and build upon their ideas, developing confidence and curiosity as they experiment and discover new things. They learn how to control themselves, manage their emotions, and begin to understand the importance of expectations, boundaries, and rules within a safe and supportive environment.

Children also have rich opportunities to think creatively and imaginatively, both alongside others and independently. Through these shared experiences, they learn to communicate effectively, cooperate, and negotiate as they investigate and solve problems.

Our school values—confidence, respect, empathy, curiosity, health, and resilience—are embedded in all aspects of play. Whether they are exploring outdoors, engaging in imaginative role play, or collaborating on shared projects, children are encouraged to demonstrate these values in their interactions and choices. Play is at the heart of our EYFS curriculum, supporting every area of development and laying the foundations for a lifelong love of learning.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

When planning, facilitating, and guiding children's activities, the Year R Team reflect carefully on how children learn best and ensure these principles are embedded in all areas of practice. The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe the ways in which children engage with the world and people around them. They underpin every aspect of the Early Years curriculum and are central to supporting deep and meaningful learning.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience new things, showing curiosity and a willingness to ‘have a go.’ Through play, they gain confidence to take risks and explore new ideas.
- **Active Learning** – children show focus, persistence, and enjoyment in their activities. They concentrate for longer periods, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and take pride in their efforts and achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children develop their own ideas, make connections between their experiences, and begin to plan and test strategies for solving problems. They learn to reflect on what works and adapt their thinking when needed.

These characteristics are interwoven throughout our EYFS environment, helping each child to become an independent, motivated, and resilient learner.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

At our school, we celebrate the unique qualities of every child and believe that each one truly matters. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to thrive, achieve their best, and build a rich understanding of the world by considering their diverse life experiences when planning their learning.

We set realistic yet inspiring expectations, tailored to each child’s needs, to support them in reaching the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Our thoughtful planning is designed to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, diverse ethnic groups, different linguistic backgrounds, and those who are particularly able.

Children’s learning is carefully assessed on an ongoing basis, allowing the Year R Team to respond to their individual needs and plan for their next steps. We personalise learning through:

- A holistic approach – every member of the EYFS team works to understand the whole child.
- A carefully planned and thought-out curriculum – designed to build on children’s knowledge, experiences, and interests while boosting their confidence and self-esteem.
- Flexible teaching strategies – adapting approaches to match each child’s learning style and needs.
- Engaging opportunities – offering a wide range of activities that motivate children and support effective learning.
- Safe and supportive environments – where every child’s voice is heard and valued.
- Diverse resources – reflecting the rich variety of our community and promoting equality, avoiding stereotypes and discrimination.
- Differentiated planning – ensuring activities are suited to the abilities and needs of all children.
- Ongoing monitoring and support – tracking progress and providing timely guidance to help each child flourish.

Through these practices, we nurture confident, curious, and resilient learners, giving every child the foundations they need to grow, explore, and succeed.

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Our medium-term planning is completed half-termly, and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Expected level and achieving the Early Learning Goals.

Daily phonics helps to build a solid foundation for children's Reading and Writing.

The EYFS Team makes full use of the classroom, outdoor learning environment, the hall, the field and playground ensuring that they can experience a wide range of activities throughout the year.

Assessment

The national Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework provides a tool for teachers to assess children's achievements against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) at the end of the Foundation Stage. The EYFS encompasses 17 Early Learning Goals across 7 Areas of Learning. Regular assessments of children's learning help ensure that future planning is tailored to meet their individual needs. In the Foundation Stage, assessment primarily takes the form of observations and recorded work.

At the start of the school year, the reception team ensures a gentle transition for all children, allowing time to build safe and secure relationships. This approach enables staff to understand each child fully—their interests, strengths, areas for development—and to identify strategies to support every child's learning journey.

During the first six weeks, EYFS practitioners complete the statutory Government Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) with each child individually. In addition, Speech and Language assessments are carried out for children who may require additional support. This early identification allows targeted interventions to be implemented promptly, ensuring every child receives the best possible start to their education.

The Year R team also uses ongoing observations to establish each child's starting points across all areas of the EYFS curriculum, informing planning and next steps. Each term, the class teacher completes the school's assessment tool based on these observations. Professional discussions are guided by the non-statutory *Development Matters – Early Years Foundation Stage* document to support accurate judgements. At the end of the final term, a summary of each child's achievements against the ELGs is submitted to the local authority and shared with the child's next teacher.

Children maintain a work book, which documents their progression and informs the team of next steps. Both adult-led and child-initiated activities are recorded, providing ongoing assessment for learning and supporting continuous development.

Parents and carers receive an annual report detailing their child's progress, including the final assessment from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP).

In the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches age 5, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child (before 30 June in that term). Each child is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development

- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

Working with parents and carers

In reception, we firmly believe that building a strong and positive partnership with parents and carers is a vital component to supporting all children in their learning, development, and well-being. All parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Conducting home visits to learn about the child prior to starting school, so that the learning environment can be adapted to the individual child's interest and needs.
- Talking to parents or carers about their child during Stay and Play sessions throughout the year.
- Meeting with children in small groups in the first two days of term to enable and encourage more personalised learning throughout the year.
- Inviting all parents and carers to an Induction Meeting in the Summer Term before their child starts school.
- Sharing the Year R curriculum, routines and expectations with parents and carers via the class app, Seesaw
- Offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress or individual concerns. Formal parent consultations take place in the Autumn and Spring Terms, where the teacher and parent discuss the child's progress and individual Literacy, Maths and social targets. At the end of the academic year parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress.
- Inviting all parents to the class app, Seesaw, where they can see what their child has been learning at school as well as create their own observations. This is also a platform that will provide parents with information on Phonics and Maths learning for the coming weeks.

Resources and the Learning Environment

The learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, promotes and encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the resources and activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. The environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely in order to develop in the seven areas of learning, while enabling and promoting independent explorative learning through play.

Staff Training

At Bledlow Ridge School, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff receive regular training and updates in safeguarding and child protection in line with the latest Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework (2024) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025).

We will:

- Train all staff in safeguarding and child protection procedures, including the recognition and reporting of concerns.
- Ensure all staff understand their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at all times.
- Provide induction training for all new staff, volunteers, and students before they begin working with children.
- Renew whole-school safeguarding training every two years, with interim updates and refreshers as needed.
- Keep staff informed of changes to statutory guidance and school policies.
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported in implementing safeguarding procedures.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. The DSL provides ongoing support, advice, and guidance to all staff.

Records of all safeguarding, child protection, and behaviour concerns are logged and monitored through CPOMS, our secure online system for reporting and managing welfare information.

Further details can be found in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, available on the school website under Policies → Safeguarding.

Safer Recruitment

When recruiting staff, Bledlow Ridge School follows the statutory guidance in KCSIE (2025) and the EYFS framework regarding the suitability of adults working with children.

We will:

- Obtain references for all new staff, volunteers, and students prior to appointment.
- Verify identity, qualifications, and right to work in the UK.
- Conduct enhanced DBS checks and maintain a Single Central Record of all vetting information.
- Record details of all checks, qualifications, and references.

All recruitment processes follow the school's Safer Recruitment Policy, which is available on the school website under Policies → Safeguarding.

Whistleblowing

All staff at Bledlow Ridge School are expected to maintain the highest standards of conduct. We ensure that staff:

- Are aware of the school's Whistleblowing Policy and procedures.

- Feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice without fear of reprisal.
- Know that all concerns will be taken seriously and handled sensitively.

If a staff member has a concern, they should report it directly to the Headteacher.

If the concern involves the Headteacher, it should be reported to the Chair of the Governing Body.

The Whistleblowing Policy is available on the school website under Policies → Safeguarding.

Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

Bledlow Ridge School recognises that children learn best when they are healthy, safe, and secure, and when their individual needs are met through positive relationships and a safe, stimulating environment.

We are fully committed to fulfilling our statutory safeguarding and welfare responsibilities under the EYFS (2024) and KCSIE (2024).

All practitioners are alert to any issues of concern in children's lives, at home or elsewhere.

Please refer to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for full details (available on the school website).

Responding to Allegations or Concerns

If we have concerns about a child's safety or welfare, we will immediately notify the Buckinghamshire Children's Social Care Team, following local authority procedures. In emergencies, we will also inform the police.

If any allegation is made of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working, or looking after children on or off the premises, we will inform Ofsted within 14 days of the allegation being made and report the action taken.

All safeguarding, behaviour, and child protection concerns are recorded and monitored on CPOMS, ensuring secure, confidential, and consistent reporting and follow-up.

Investigation of Concerns

When a concern or allegation is received, the Headteacher (or the Chair of Governors if the allegation concerns the Headteacher) will:

- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable timeframe.
- Record all relevant information and details about the concern.
- Establish whether there is sufficient cause for further investigation.
- Liaise with the DSL, governing body, and, where appropriate, external agencies (e.g. Local Authority Designated Officer – LADO).
- Keep the person who raised the concern informed of progress and outcomes where appropriate.

Following any investigation, the Headteacher and Governing Body will review relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences.

Paediatric First Aid (PFA)

We ensure that at least one member of staff with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate is on site at all times when children are present, including on school trips and visits.

All PFA certificates are renewed every three years, in accordance with EYFS requirements.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL holds lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Their responsibilities include:

- Liaising with local statutory children's services and safeguarding partners.
- Providing support, advice, and guidance to staff on all safeguarding matters.
- Attending training consistent with Annex C of the EYFS framework.
- Ensuring all concerns are recorded and monitored on CPOMS.

Absence

We follow up promptly on any unexplained absences.

If a child is absent and parents/carers have not notified the school, we will contact them and, if necessary, emergency contacts.

Prolonged or frequent absences are monitored and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer if necessary.

For more information, see our Attendance Policy, available on the school website.

Safer Eating

While children are eating, a qualified staff member holding a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate is always present. Children are supervised closely and seated safely while eating.

Before admission, we gather information on each child's:

- Dietary requirements and preferences
- Allergies and intolerances
- Health and medical needs

This information is shared with all staff involved in food preparation and supervision.

- We work with parents and health professionals to create and maintain Allergy Action Plans, review them regularly, and store them securely.
- We prepare food safely and in line with DfE Early Years Nutrition Guidance, reducing the risk of choking and ensuring food meets each child's developmental stage and dietary needs.
- Any incidents involving choking or allergic reactions are recorded in our Accident Log and reported to parents on the same day. Records are reviewed regularly to inform safer practice.

Accident or Injury

In reception, we keep a fully stocked first aid box accessible at all times and a written accident log records all injuries and first aid treatment administered.

Parents or carers are informed the same day (or as soon as practicable) of any:

- Accident or injury sustained by their child
- First aid treatment provided

We notify the relevant authority of any serious accident, illness, or injury of a child while in our care and record the action taken, as required by the EYFS framework.

Safety of Premises

- We ensure our premises are safe, secure, and suitable for the age and stage of the children in our care.
- We comply with all health and safety, fire safety, and hygiene requirements.
- The indoor and outdoor environments are checked daily and maintained to high safety standards to promote confident, active, and safe learning.

Glossary

Cultural Capital: "is the essential knowledge that children need to prepare for their future success. It is about giving children the best possible start to their early education." (Early Years Inspection Handbook 2019.)

Continuous Provision: "describes all the different provision areas which are available for the children to use every day. Within each of these areas there are a range of core resources that children can use all the time, throughout the whole year. Planning effectively for continuous provision is crucial and involves a consideration of classroom layout and resourcing that will enable staff to offer a breath of learning opportunities." (Early Excellence Centre for Inspirational Learning 2021.)

Expected level - By the end of Reception (Year R), children are expected to achieve all 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, which define the level of development children should reach across seven areas of learning.

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), which became statutory in 2021, is carried out within the first six weeks of children starting school. Its main purpose is to provide an on-entry measure of attainment that serves as a starting point for tracking progress from Reception to the end of Key Stage 2.

The assessment focuses specifically on Mathematics and Literacy, Communication and Language, meaning that not all areas of the EYFS are directly assessed.

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) oversee the administration and guidance of the RBA, and it remains clearly linked to the EYFS learning and development requirements. According to the latest guidance from the Department for Education (DfE, 2025), the RBA continues to be used for cohort-level progress measures, and the EYFS statutory framework (updated 2024) reaffirms that children should be assessed against all 17 ELGs at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.