



"A small school with a huge heart."

# **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy**

Approved by

Last reviewed

Next review due

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## **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year, which in Buildwas Academy, is Willow Class, where we have preschool mixed with Reception.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

## **Aims/Objectives**

At Buildwas Academy, our school vision is drawn from our nature of being a small school with a huge heart.

**H**appiness

**E**nabling

**A**spire

**R**esilience

**T**rust

These words are pivotal to all that we do. We aspire to ensure that the happiness of the whole school community is our priority. We put our trust in each other, enabling us to provide ambitious, creative learning opportunities, which build resilience and nurture our children to evolve into the best versions of themselves.

We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential. We work on giving the children experiences, to help them gain the skills, to reach their end of year goals.

As outlined in the '[Statutory Framework for 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.'

## **Statutory Framework of EYFS**

We adhere to the '[Statutory Framework of the EYFS](#)' and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/ carers;
- Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates.

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

### **Intent**

Throughout their time in Willow Class our children partake in an ambitious broad and balanced curriculum. The [Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum](#) is a top level plan of everything young need to learn and we design our curriculum in a sequential way using [Development Matters](#) to ensure progress towards the end of reception goals. These goals are defined as Early Learning Goals (ELGs)

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected as is the role of executive function. Recognition is given to language development being vital and embedded throughout all areas of learning.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1. These three areas are the prime areas:

- Communication and Language

- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

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

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

### **Implement**

As previously outlined, our curriculum incorporates learning through play, learning by adults modelling, by observing each other and through guided learning and direct teaching which is increased as children become older and progress. It is also important to highlight that our plans are flexible to allow us to respond quickly to children's new interests and/or needs.

Our pedagogy and curriculum supports the develop of a child's ability to hold information in mind, focus their attention, regulate their behaviour and plan what to do next thus developing executive function.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum at Buildwas Academy are three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning.

- 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 thing

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

'What children learn is important, but how children learn is even more important if they are to become learners in today's society.'  
Helen Moylett How Children Learn, Nancy Stewart (2011)

Children are provided with a well-planned learning environment both indoors and outdoors in which a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences are provided. These facilitate children to explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication,

and physical development.

We create medium term plans and try to include the children's interest and what we have observed them doing and playing where we can. The medium-term plans are developed into exciting topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning and ensures progress of skills towards our end goals and beyond.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met.

## **Impact**

### **Observations and assessment**

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations when they show those 'wow' moments that indicate achievement and progress being made. These are recorded in a variety of ways and everyone in class and throughout our setting are encouraged to contribute.

Observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal, online 'Tapestry' Learning Journal. Parents/carers receive a notification when an observation has been added to their child's Learning Journal and they can then view this observation and any related photographs and videos.

Parents/carers are actively encouraged to add their own comments and also to upload their own observations to show us what their children are able to do at home.

These ongoing observations are used to inform the EYFS Profile. The children's progress is reviewed continually. Throughout their time in EYFS, parents/carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning; both informally through our 'open door' policy and more formally during parent/teacher consultations.

At the end of the year the EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher - who uses the exemplification documents, and their knowledge of the children to make a 'best fit' judgement.

The children are assessed against each area of the EYFS curriculum achieving:

- Expected ELG – meeting the expected level

- Emerging ELG – not yet meeting the expected level

This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help school benchmark and identify improvements.

At the end of Reception, the child's ability to self-regulate should allow them to focus their thinking, monitor what they are doing and adapt, regulate strong feelings, be patient for what they want and bounce back when things get difficult therefore support a smooth transition into Year 1.

### **Safety including safeguarding and welfare requirements**

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Buildwas Academy. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety.

In Reception we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the [Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage](#) and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately.
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose;
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the school devices are used to photograph children (for Tapestry observations and assessment purposes) and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs.

The EYFS staff hold the Paediatric First aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Buildwas Academy. Backing up this policy is a dedicated safeguarding team, which includes one Designated Safeguarding Lead, whom is the Acting Head of School and two Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead teacher. All staff are vigilant in

reporting concerns.

### **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability, or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals.

We work closely with the parents/carers of our high achieving children to ensure that their individual needs are met, and their talents fostered. We ensure that these children are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies.

### **The role of parents/carers**

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

- Holding information evenings before the children start school.
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our introductory sessions in school.
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions.
- Inviting them to a parent consultation in the Autumn and Spring Terms to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning.
- Valuing parents' contributions to learning journeys.
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their online reading records.
- Providing parents with an end of year summary report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile.
- We also draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting to talk about their lives, work, and experiences.

## **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for, and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Children attend a number of introductory sessions with their parents/carers into Willow Class to develop familiarity with the settings and practitioners.

Parents/carers are encouraged to take up the offer to visit and meet with Reception staff in school. This is a valuable time to talk 1:1 with them and answer any concerns/queries they may have.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teacher meets with the Year 1 teacher to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teacher is able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend a number of sessions towards the end of the school year in the Key Stage 1 classroom to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher and are 'next year ready'.

## **Monitoring of the EYFS**

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Leader is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Executive Principal, Head of School and EYFS team as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults in the EYFS team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets.