



'Educating children to confidently face the future'

# **Barton Seagrave Primary School**

## **Foundation Stage Policy**

Dated: September 2025

Review Date: September 2026

“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, September 2021

## Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

***A unique child.*** We recognise that children are competent learners, who develop in individual ways and at varying rates and we value the diversity of individuals. We believe that every child should be given the opportunity to achieve their best, through setting realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. All children in the Foundation Stage are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities and their families are valued. We use praise and encouragement, as well as celebrations and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

***Positive relationships.*** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

***Enabling environments.*** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through our observations, we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging yet achievable activities or experiences to extend their learning.

***Learning and development.*** Learning is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. In the classrooms and learning areas, children are encouraged to access equipment and resources independently.

At Barton Seagrave Primary School we value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. The school is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe and stimulating learning environment that encourages children to be motivated and involved in their learning. We recognise and celebrate each child’s achievements. All our children are respected and valued and we provide experiences to support their development in a warm, caring and secure environment.

We believe that we can best meet the needs of individual children by working closely with parents and carers. From the outset, we aim to develop and maintain partnerships between parents, carers and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect, which promote the sharing of information and knowledge for the benefit of the children in our care.

## Aims

It is every child’s right to grow up safely, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

## **At Barton Seagrave Primary School, we aim to:**

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and well-structured environment in which children are motivated towards independent learning.
- Provide an environment and learning experiences, which are sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place a solid foundation for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- To enable children to make an effective and happy transition from home, playgroup or nursery to school through effective liaison.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress through providing opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development in the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents and guardians in the education of their child and value their contributions. To keep parents well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress.
- Provide opportunities whereby children can experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which builds on and extends the children's own interests.

## **Learning and Development**

We recognise that children learn and develop at different rates and have their own learning styles. We value all the Areas of Learning and Development equally and understand that they are inter-connected. We provide a range of teaching approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and language. We create activities that build on and extend the children's interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. The curriculum is broad and balanced following the EYFS statutory framework. Our **Educational Programme** is shaped by the seven areas of learning and development.

There are 3 **Prime Areas**. These areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving:

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

and 4 **Specific Areas**, through which the 3 Prime Areas are strengthened and applied:

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

There are 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) covering the 7 areas of learning and development (as stated in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage) and the ELGs support the Reception teachers in making an holistic, best-fit judgement about each child's development, and their readiness for Year One during the final term in Reception. When forming a judgement about whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, teachers draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. The expectation is that most children will achieve the ELG's by the end of the Reception year. A small number of children will continue to work on achieving the necessary skills and knowledge as they progress through Year One.

The 'Development Matters in the EYFS' document identifies age-related expectations from birth to 5 in each of the 7 areas of learning. This document is used by staff to identify the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need if they are to achieve their ELGs by the end of the Foundation Stage.

We recognise that children learn and develop at different rates and that effective pedagogy is a mixture of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching.

## **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development are interconnected; The Specific Areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. Prime areas are fundamental, work together with, and support development in all other areas.

The ways in which the child engages with others and their environment (Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning) underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to be an effective and motivated learner. The characteristics are:

Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to ‘have a go’

Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

## **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The reception classes organise the curriculum through half termly themes. The themes build on the children’s interests, knowledge and skills and enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum. The long-term, medium term and short term planning reflect a balance of the areas of learning and development from the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The teachers use the plans as a guide for the weekly planning; however, the teachers may adapt these in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure future planning reflects identified needs. Good planning is the key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. It also helps to foster the children’s interests and develops a high level of motivation in the children. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. All staff who work in the Early Years Stage are involved in this process. A mixture of directed and free choice activities are planned and children are supported and/or encouraged to engage with a range of activities to ensure they make progress in all areas of their learning. Children are encouraged to experience all areas of activity during the week, although they may not experience them each day.

On entry into school, the children are baseline assessed using the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) and through observations made by staff. The children are assessed during their Foundation Stage year through dialogue with the children, observations (recorded using Tapestry), and through more formal, structured assessments. These observations and assessments, completed by both teachers and teaching assistants, are used to inform the teachers’ judgements regarding each child’s progress.

There are termly Pupil Progress meetings between the SLT and the EYFS teachers to review progress. We moderate across the three Foundation Stage classes, with other local schools to ensure consistency of judgements and attend annual assessment trialling training with the LA.

In the final term of the Foundation Stage, the EYFS profile is completed. The teachers report each child's progress against all 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether children are meeting expected levels of development or if they have not yet met expected levels.

Attainment is shared with parents, as part of the written report at the end of the academic year. The parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with the Early Years Stage Team each term to discuss progress.

## **Learning Through Play**

Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through guided learning and direct teaching.

“Development Matters” Department for Education, July 2021

At Barton Seagrave Primary the staff carefully organise the indoor and outdoor environments for quality play. Staff join children in their own play to sensitively support and extend children's learning and to develop language and extend vocabulary.

## **The Learning Environment**

The Early Years environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be for example active, quiet, creative. In each learning area, the children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Foundation Stage has an enclosed outdoor space and access to our extensive playground and field. During each week at school, the children experience all the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

## **The Outdoor Environment**

Learning outside the classroom supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles by offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement, as well as promoting a sense of well-being. It gives them contact with the natural world and offers them experiences that are unique to being outdoors, such as direct contact with the weather and the seasons. Outdoor play also supports children's problem-solving skills and nurtures their creativity, as well as providing rich opportunities for their developing imagination, inventiveness, resourcefulness and vocabulary. Our outdoor environment offers more space than indoors and therefore is particularly important to those children who learn best through active movement.

## **Home and School Links – Parents as Partners**

Children learn to be independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents or carers to work closely together in Early Years. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We do this through

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts school either during the Story Time sessions and voluntary home visits.
- Inviting all parents to an Induction Meeting during the Summer term before their child starts school and encourage the parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Staff talk to pre-school settings to ensure a smooth transition into school and if possible visit the children in their setting.
- Staff attend home visits in the first week of the Autumn term (these are optional).
- We have an 'open door policy' and the Foundation Stage team greet the children and parents as they enter school each morning and leave school at the end of the day.
- All parents are invited to attend formal meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms at which the teacher and the parents discuss the child's progress and parents receive a formal report on their child's attainment, achievements and progress at the end of the Reception Year.
- Staff liaise closely with the before and after school provisions the children attend.
- We ask parents to complete Achievement Leaves at home detailing things children have achieved across all areas of their learning. The leaves are returned to school and displayed.
- Observations are shared with parents using 'Tapestry' and we invite parents to share photographs and/or comments of their children's learning at home.
- We have a weekly home learning letter to guide parents in supporting their child at home.
- We invite parents to attend sessions for early reading (phonics), writing and number so that they can support their child with their learning at home.

## **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

Children with special educational needs are supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support. **The EYFS staff work closely with our school SENCo and Family Support Worker who provide advice, information and training for staff and parents and arrange external intervention and support, as necessary.**

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.