



**Buxton Primary School**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**November 2023**

<b>Formally adopted by the Governing Board:</b>	<b>Buxton Primary School</b>
<b>On:-</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	<b>Kathryn Corder</b>
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“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 2021)**

### **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage refers to all children from birth until the end of their Reception year. Therefore it includes children from the age of 4.0 years up to the age of 5.11 years. At Buxton, we believe that all children should be given the chance to experience the very best possible start to their education. In their first five years of life, children have developed a range of skills, knowledge and understandings at a speed that will never again be repeated in their lives. This policy aims to describe the features of teaching and learning which will create an environment enabling children to thrive. It clearly sets out our philosophy and priorities in the first year for a child in our school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- **a secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

At Buxton Primary School we aim to achieve this by:

- setting the standards for individual learning, development and care to enable each child to fulfil their potential
- providing for equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- creating the framework for partnership by working with parents, professionals and other outside agencies
- ensuring that learning and development is planned around the individual needs and interests of the child and informed by the use of on-going observational assessment
- laying a secure foundation for future learning through learning plans and enabling environments

### **Teaching and learning**

In planning and guiding children’s activities, our staff observe the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. The three **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning** are:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties

- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

### **Playing and exploring**

At Buxton, we recognise that play underpins all learning and development for young children. If we can make sure that this foundation is right, then we are confident that the children will go on to make good progress in other areas of learning. Play is fundamental to the quality of life of children. Children's development, learning, imagination, creativity and independence are promoted through the act of play. Play can help to keep children healthy and active. It allows children to experience and encounter boundaries, learn to assess and manage risk in their lives; both physical and social.

Play enables children to learn through experience that cannot be taught. Through exploring and testing ideas children learn:

- how to make new friends and communicate with other people.
- to play new games and learn new skills including physical skills such as tree climbing.
- to get along with other people, learn how to negotiate, share and work as a team.
- how to keep themselves safe and be healthy.
- about taking risks and making decisions.

As a school we understand the value of play and aim to develop a wide range of inside and outside play environments to meet the needs of all of our children. We believe that play is satisfying and freely chosen by the child. Play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. It may be serious or lighthearted. It may be done simply for its own sake. We aim to ensure children's choice over their experiences is promoted through the provision made in our grounds.

### **Active Learning**

Children learn best through physical and mental challenges and we provide these learning opportunities for our children. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning to develop their confidence and learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

We ensure that children are motivated and interested by close assessment of their play which informs future planning. This ensures that the ideas are coming from the children themselves. We balance this with planning other activities which are whole school related, for example festivals and celebrations.

### **Creativity and Critical Thinking**

When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of

doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

Our children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, whether indoors or outside. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children are encouraged and taught to access resources freely and to move them around the learning environment to extend their learning.

The EYFS is based upon four basic principles

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### **A Unique Child**

At Buxton Primary School we believe every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We give every child the opportunity to achieve their best by having realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children across the areas of learning and development. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with disabilities, children with additional educational needs, children with medical needs and children from all social and cultural backgrounds. We follow the principles of **In the Moment Planning** alongside the **Development Matters** objectives to support each child to develop at their own rate, as an individual.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, skills, experience and interests
- planning opportunities to develop their well-being, self-esteem and confidence, including experiences that provide risk and challenge
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a secure and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is respected and valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination or stereotyping
- planning challenging and appropriate experiences for higher achieving children. Some experiences will be explicit and others through experiences and challenges set up in the environment
- supporting them to make progress and by providing additional support when identified
- using age appropriate ways to seek the views of all children through observing, listening and sensitive discussion
- seeking advice from specialist agencies where appropriate

### **Positive Relationships**

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. At Buxton Primary School, we respect that parents are the child's first and future educators. We believe that the positive relationships we build are the key to effective partnerships between all practitioners, parents, carers and families.

We meet the needs of all of our children by:

- developing positive relationships with parents during the induction programme, which involves visits to pre-school and nursery settings, home visits and transition days in the summer term.
- developing effective partnerships with families throughout the year by offering regular opportunities for them to talk about their child's progress through our open-door policy, parents evenings, education bulletins and Tapestry online learning journal.
- helping parents to support children's learning and development through informal discussions, termly topic plans, pupil progress targets and in-school workshops on specific areas of learning.
- recognising that friendships and relationships are an important part of a child's development from birth.
- encouraging parents to help in school and become involved in a range of enrichment activities eg. Family Learning Days, Enrichment sessions etc

### **Enabling Environments**

At Buxton Primary School we recognise that the environment plays an essential role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. Our environment is carefully planned both indoors and outdoors to help children achieve across all aspects of the EYFS. Opportunities are provided for children to take part in a wide range of experiences and to extend their interests with adult support and encouragement. Children are encouraged to be as independent as possible, taking responsibility for resources and ownership of their learning environment.

We meet the needs of all of our children by:

- encouraging children to communicate and talk about their experiences.
- developing children's independence and decision making by providing an environment where children can freely access resources and select from the experiences on offer.
- using the outdoor environment to enhance learning and development.
- analysing children's responses to different situations and identifying their future learning needs.
- using materials and equipment that reflects both the community that the children come from and the wider world.
- encouraging a positive attitude to learning by ensuring our planning begins by observing the children in order to consider their current interests, developmental stage and learning style.

The environment is organised in such a way that the children are inspired to learn. We teach the children through areas of learning, both indoors and outside. The outdoor area is not a replica of the inside, but has opportunities for the children to play with larger equipment, take different types of risks and engage in the natural world.

It is through these areas that we teach the key skills. Teaching and learning opportunities are presented in a range of ways:

- Teacher led
- Teacher initiated but independently carried out by children
- Child initiated

### **Early Literacy in the Reception class**

The learning environments at Buxton, both indoors and out, display many links to literacy, reflecting the interdependent nature of the four aspects of language development: speaking, listening, reading and writing. We create a literacy-rich environment covering the following elements:

- environmental print: letters and words
- opportunities for children to read independently and for adults to read with children
- books and literacy areas
- early writing
- resources for phonics

### **Writing**

The Teachers and other adults have a crucial role to play in finding ways of engaging and collaborating with children in writing, creating interesting and purposeful opportunities to write both indoors and outdoors, and planning higher levels of adult-child interaction that support children's thinking. We encourage all children to have a go at writing without fear of 'getting it wrong'. We ensure that we create a language rich environment which is fundamental if children are to become confident writers. There are opportunities for children to practise their writing skills in all areas of the classroom and outside, not just in a writing area.

### **Handwriting**

Handwriting is a complex motor skill that is dependent upon the maturity of other skills. In Reception we teach gross motor skills as essential foundations for finer motor skills like handwriting, drawing and manipulating tools. If a child is developing at an expected level then they will be ready to start forming letters and numbers correctly. If they have yet to develop gross motor skills then we support them to develop those skills first before attempting handwriting. The letter formations are taught during phonics lessons and practiced independently or during small group activities with an adult.

Primarily in Reception we teach the ***foundations*** for handwriting, which are

- holding a pencil / writing tool comfortably and correctly
- forming lower case and capital letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the correct place.
- forming the digits 0-9

### **Phonics and Reading**

At Buxton Primary School we follow our own systematic synthetic phonics programme. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills, prepares children for learning to read and teaches children to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting by the age of five.

**There are six overlapping phases.**

Phase and NC book band	Phonic Knowledge and Skills
<i>Phase One (lilac)</i> (Nursery/Reception)	Activities are divided into seven aspects, including environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body sounds, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and finally oral blending and segmenting.
<i>Phase Two</i> (Reception) up to 6 weeks ( <i>Pink</i> )	Learning 19 letters of the alphabet and one sound for each. Blending sounds together to make words. Segmenting words into their separate sounds. Beginning to read simple captions.
<i>Phase Three</i> (Reception) up to 12 weeks ( <i>Red</i> )	The remaining 7 letters of the alphabet, one sound for each. Graphemes such as ch, oo, th representing the remaining phonemes not covered by single letters. Reading captions, sentences and questions. On completion of this phase, children will have learnt the "simple code", i.e. one grapheme for each phoneme in the English language.
<i>Phase Four</i> (Reception) 4 to 6 weeks ( <i>Yellow/blue</i> )	No new grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught in this phase. Children learn to blend and segment longer words with adjacent consonants, e.g. swim, clap, jump.
<i>Phase Five</i> (Throughout Year 1) <i>blue / green/ orange/ turquoise</i>	Now we move on to the "complex code". Children learn more graphemes for the phonemes which they already know, plus different ways of pronouncing the graphemes they already know.
<i>Phase Six</i> (Throughout Year 2 and beyond)	Working on spelling, including prefixes and suffixes, doubling and dropping letters etc.

### **Reading books**

All children are given a colour banded reading book during the first half term in Reception. This will relate to the phase of phonics they are accessing during group phonics sessions (see table above). Later in the year the teacher also plans for a session of **Guided Reading**. This is a focused activity where the children share a book as part of a small group with an adult.

### **Learning and Development**

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The EYFS Framework covers the education and care of all children in an Early Years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of Learning and Development: All areas are important and inter-connected. 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. Children should mostly develop the **3 prime areas** first.

These are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

These prime areas are those most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in the **4 specific areas**. Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

These are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

All of the 7 areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led (child working with, being taught by, the adult) and child-initiated (child chosen) activities. Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. Children are taught specific skills by the adults who support them, and through their learning environment, with opportunities to further develop and apply these skills.

### **Planning**

In Reception at Buxton Primary School, we follow the principles of **Planning in the Moment**. Children are given the opportunity to choose what or where they would like to play, rather than being directed to an activity by a practitioner. When the practitioner engages with the child, they approach the child to enquire about the activity, rather than calling the child over to them. The practitioner is then curious and enthusiastic about what the child is doing, which leads to a moment where child-led learning can take place. Adults listen carefully to children, use a range of open-ended questions and praise them to create a positive learning experience. Future activities are then planned by staff in-line with the children's interests.

### **Assessment**

Within the first six weeks of school we carry out the statutory baseline assessment which gives us an overall picture of whether a child is at, above or below the expected level of development for their age in the areas of literacy, communication and language and mathematics.



We use this evidence to plan for the needs of each child, considering their strengths and weaker areas and as a benchmark for their future progress. If children have specific needs, and we recognise they might need extra support, the teacher plans regular and specific interventions which support the area of need.

All children in Reception have a termly focus week where they are observed and assessed by both class teachers and teaching assistants to gain a picture of the whole child and their development. Other observations take place throughout the year to support the teacher's termly assessments.

During the summer term the EYFS Profile is completed to summarise and describe children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It is based on on-going observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning, and the three Characteristics of Effective Learning.

### **The teacher**

In our EYFS setting there is a teacher who is supported by teaching assistants. The role of the adult is key in the development of the children's learning and progress. The adult has a number of specific roles in the classroom-

- To follow the principles of **In the Moment Planning**, providing a stimulating environment in-line with the children's current interests.
- To assess, through observation and tasks, current levels of attainment and build opportunities to extend their understanding and knowledge.
- To support a group or individual through high level questioning and/ or interaction in order to maximise the learning taking place. This may be participating in role play, modelling good practise, or asking questions in order to take the learning further.
- To enable children to become enquiring, independent and resilient individuals.

Teachers ensure that the requirements of the EYFS are met through all seven areas of learning and development, and support children to make progress towards the early learning goals, which are the established expectations for most children to reach by the end of the reception year. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's assessment through an online learning journal (see Tapestry policy). At the end of the Reception year in school, all children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals for the seventeen areas of learning and this is recorded onto the Early Years profile. Within the final term of the EYFS we provide a written report to parents, explaining children's progress against the ELGs and a short report on the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. This information is also passed on to the Year One teacher to inform future planning and provision.

### **Additional Adults**

Any additional adults who work in Early Years receive CPD and guidance from teachers about effective interactions, high level questioning and expectations in Early Years.

### **Health and Safety.**

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2021) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

As a Healthy School all children under five receive free milk. Reception children have access to fresh water and free fruit or vegetables throughout the day. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

### **Ensuring Wellbeing**

At Buxton Primary School the well-being of the children in our school is of paramount importance to us. We monitor the children's wellbeing using a well-established tool, the Leuven's Scales, developed by Professor Ferre Leavers. The tool focuses on two indicators of quality Early Years, wellbeing and involvement. This information can be used, alongside other EYFS assessments, to support children when they begin school and cater for their individual needs.