



# New EYFS Policy

Signed by headteacher: *A Hughes*

Signed by Chair of Governors: *David Bradley*

Previous Policy Approved: 6th May 2026

Date for review: 6th May 2027



# Early Years Policy

## 1. Statement of Intent

At Bitterne Manor Primary School, we are committed to providing high-quality Early Years education for all children aged 3–5, including Preschool/Nursery (Ducklings) and Reception (Kingfishers). We recognise the EYFS as a crucial stage in children's development and aim to provide a secure foundation for lifelong learning, positive relationships and emotional wellbeing.

We aim to:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum
- Ensure all children make strong progress
- Promote independence, resilience and curiosity
- Develop communication and language
- Build strong partnerships with parents
- Provide an inclusive environment where all children are supported

## 2. Legislation

This policy is based on:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- EYFS Statutory Framework (2024)
- Development Matters
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Teaching and Learning Guide
- Assessment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy

## 3. Principles and School Values in the Early Years

Our provision is based on the four overarching principles of the EYFS:

- every child is a unique child
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

At Bitterne Manor, these principles are lived through our values.

<b>Brave Hearts</b>	<b>Motivated Minds</b>	<b>Proud Voices</b>	<b>Supportive Connections</b>
Children are encouraged to take risks, try new things and develop resilience.	Children develop curiosity, independence and a love of learning.	Language and communication are prioritised.	Strong relationships support learning and wellbeing.
<b>In practice:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adults promote a 'have a go'</li></ul>	<b>In practice:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning is driven by</li></ul>	<b>In practice:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adults model and extend</li></ul>	<b>In practice:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive</li></ul>

<p>attitude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are supported to persevere</li> <li>• Mistakes are recognised as part of learning</li> </ul>	<p>exploration and engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults extend thinking through questioning</li> <li>• Provision supports problem-solving and independence</li> </ul>	<p>vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are encouraged to speak and share ideas</li> <li>• High-quality interactions develop communication skills</li> </ul>	<p>relationships between adults and children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectful interactions between peers</li> <li>• Strong partnerships with families</li> </ul>
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These principles are embedded in all aspects of practice and are monitored regularly by leaders to ensure consistency and impact.

#### 4. Structure of EYFS

Our Early Years provision caters for children aged 3 to 5 and includes both Ducklings and Kingfishers. Children typically join Ducklings in the term following their third birthday (or on third birthday if entitled to 2 year old funding) and move into Reception in the September after they turn four. In Reception, teaching increasingly prepares children for the expectations of Key Stage 1 through a gradual increase in adult-directed learning and sustained focus. However, continuous provision continues to be promoted into Year 1 to support a smooth transition.

We operate as an integrated EYFS unit, with a strong emphasis on continuity between Ducklings and Kingfishers. This includes:

- shared spaces through an open-door provision, with children working collaboratively across the EYFS
- regular opportunities for mixed-age learning, including designated periods of 'rainbow time', where children access a shared environment and provision
- a shared understanding of pedagogy and expectations
- collaborative planning and professional dialogue
- consistent approaches to transition
- careful attention to children's emotional security, relationships and sense of belonging

This approach enables children to build confidence, develop independence and strengthen relationships, while ensuring a coherent and consistent learning experience across the Early Years.

#### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

##### Governing Board

- Ensures statutory requirements are met
- Holds leaders to account for outcomes and provision

##### Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the school provides a high-quality and legally compliant EYFS provision. This includes:

- appropriate policies, procedures and practices are in place
- staff are suitably qualified, trained and deployed
- teaching, assessment and curriculum provision are effective
- safeguarding and welfare requirements are met in full
- ensuring the EYFS aligns with the school's wider vision, curriculum and standards.

##### Leadership Team

- leading curriculum design and implementation
- ensuring teaching and provision are rooted in the EYFS characteristics of effective learning

- monitoring the quality of continuous provision, enhanced provision and outdoor learning
- ensuring assessment is valid, proportionate and useful
- supporting staff development and coaching
- ensuring parents are informed about their child's progress and the school's early years expectations
- ensuring compliance with statutory assessment and welfare requirements

### **SENCO**

The SENCo has overall responsibility for SEND across the school, including the Early Years. The SENCo:

- ensures statutory duties are met
- oversees identification, assessment and provision
- leads on EHCPs and external agency involvement
- monitors the quality and impact of provision
- supports staff training and development

The SENCo works closely with the EY SEN Lead to ensure effective provision in the Early Years.

### **Early Years SEN Lead**

The EY SEN Lead is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of SEND provision within the Early Years.

The EY SEN Lead:

- supports early identification through observation and assessment
- implements and monitors support strategies
- adapts provision, teaching and interactions
- supports staff with inclusive practice
- works with parents and liaises with the SENCo

The EY SEN Lead ensures inclusive practice is embedded in daily provision.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

- ensures safeguarding procedures are fully embedded in EYFS practice.

### **EYFS Staff**

All staff working in EYFS are responsible for:

- acting in accordance with this policy at all times
- planning and delivering high-quality learning experiences
- maintaining purposeful, safe and inclusive environments
- interacting with children in ways that build language, thinking and independence
- using assessment to inform provision and next steps
- recording learning in line with school expectations
- safeguarding children and reporting concerns immediately

Each child is assigned a key person who helps ensure that their care and learning are tailored to their individual needs. **The key person:**

- helps the child settle and feel secure
- builds a strong relationship with the family
- acts as a first point of contact for parents and carers
- supports home-school communication
- helps families access additional support where needed.

## **6. Curriculum Intent and Progression**

At Bitterne Manor Primary School, our Early Years curriculum is designed to ensure that all children, regardless of starting point, develop the knowledge, vocabulary and behaviours needed to succeed in Key Stage 1 and beyond.

We recognise that many children enter our setting with varying levels of language, independence and social development. Our curriculum therefore places a strong emphasis on:

- communication and language development
- early reading and vocabulary acquisition
- number sense and early mathematics
- self-regulation, independence and positive relationships
- understanding of the world beyond children's immediate experience

The curriculum sets out clearly what children will know, remember and be able to do. It is carefully sequenced to build knowledge and skills over time. Children revisit and deepen learning through a balance of adult-led teaching, guided practice and child-initiated application within continuous provision.

Progression is evident through:

- increasing complexity of vocabulary and language structures
- deepening understanding of key concepts, particularly in mathematics and understanding the world
- greater independence, resilience and sustained engagement
- improved ability to apply learning across different contexts

In Reception, teaching increasingly prepares children for the expectations of Key Stage 1, including greater engagement in adult-directed learning, sustained focus and application of taught knowledge

## 7. Learning and Development

Our curriculum follows the EYFS statutory framework and is built around the seven areas of learning and development. These are all important and interconnected. The three prime areas are:

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

These are strengthened and applied through the four specific areas:

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

Teaching in the EYFS is rooted in the characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Teaching is underpinned by a clearly defined curriculum which sets out what children are expected to know and be able to do at each stage. Staff ensure that learning builds progressively over time and that key knowledge and vocabulary are revisited regularly to support long-term retention. At Bitterne Manor, this means that learning is planned and sequenced carefully, while remaining responsive to children's needs, interests and developmental stage. Staff use a balance of:

- adult-led teaching
- adult-guided learning
- child-initiated play
- direct teaching of key knowledge, vocabulary and routines.

Particular priority is given to:

- communication and language
- early reading and story

- early mathematics
- self-regulation, relationships and independence
- physical development and fine motor control.

Where a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with parents and carers and agree how to support the child. Staff will also consider whether a child may have SEND and whether further assessment or outside support is required.

## 8. Early Reading and Phonics

The teaching of early reading is a central priority within our Early Years provision.

In Ducklings, we follow **Pip and Pap Phonics** - a preparation programme for Early Years Settings. From Kingfishers, we follow Bug Club Phonics Programme (a systematic synthetic phonics programme) which is delivered with fidelity and consistency across Reception and into KS1. Daily phonics sessions are carefully structured to ensure that children:

- learn to recognise grapheme–phoneme correspondences
- develop blending skills for reading
- develop segmenting skills for early writing
- build fluency through regular practice and review

Children are provided with books that are closely matched to their phonics knowledge. This enables them to practise and apply their reading skills successfully, building confidence and independence.

Staff ensure that:

- phonics teaching is delivered daily and follows the agreed progression
- children who fall behind receive timely and targeted support
- reading is promoted through a language-rich environment, high-quality texts and regular storytelling

We prioritise early identification of children at risk of falling behind in reading and ensure that additional support is put in place promptly.

## 9. Communication and Language

Communication and language development is prioritised across the EYFS. Adults model, extend and explicitly teach vocabulary through high-quality interactions and sustained shared thinking.

Children are encouraged to speak in full sentences, share ideas and engage in meaningful conversations.

## 10. Planning

Planning is concise, purposeful and directly informed by assessment. It focuses on securing progression in knowledge, vocabulary and skills rather than generating excessive documentation.

The planning cycle includes observation, assessment, reflection and adaptation. Staff work collaboratively to ensure that planning:

- secures coverage of the curriculum
- builds learning over time
- responds to assessment information
- provides opportunities for repetition, retrieval and deepening
- includes appropriate challenge and support
- reflects children's interests and fascinations where appropriate

All planning must:

- reflect curriculum priorities and progression

- be informed by accurate assessment of children's learning
- identify clear learning intentions where appropriate
- include opportunities for practice and application

Planning must not:

- duplicate information recorded elsewhere
- create unnecessary workload
- reduce time spent interacting with children

Planning is not separate from provision. The environment, adult interactions, enhancements and direct teaching all form part of the planned curriculum.

Leaders monitor planning to ensure consistency, clarity and impact on children's learning.

## 11. The Learning Environment

The school recognises that the physical and emotional environment plays an important role in supporting, enabling and extending children's learning and development. We provide safe, stimulating and well-organised indoor and outdoor environments that promote active learning, exploration, creativity and independence.

All learning environments in EYFS will:

- be welcoming, orderly and purposeful
- support whole-class, group and individual learning
- provide clearly defined areas for learning and play
- offer open-ended and carefully selected resources
- be inclusive and representative of diverse families, cultures, abilities and experiences
- promote independence through accessible storage, visual prompts and consistent routines.

Displays and resources should support learning rather than create unnecessary visual overload. The environment should reflect current learning, children's interests and key vocabulary, while remaining calm, organised and usable.

Provision is regularly reviewed by leaders to ensure it reflects curriculum priorities and supports progression for all children.

## 12. Continuous Provision

Continuous provision is central to our EYFS approach. It refers to the resources, spaces and opportunities that are consistently available for children to access during child-initiated learning, both indoors and outdoors. Continuous provision is not simply free play; it is planned, intentional and directly connected to curriculum goals.

At Bitterne Manor, continuous provision must:

- support children to revisit, practise and deepen previously taught knowledge and skills
- promote independence, autonomy and sustained engagement
- give children opportunities to make choices and apply learning across the curriculum
- be responsive to assessment, observation and children's interests
- remain stable enough for children to build familiarity, while being reviewed and refreshed when needed.

### Expectations for staff

All EYFS classrooms will include clearly defined and well-resourced learning areas, for example:

- role play

- construction
- small world
- creative / malleable
- mark making / writing
- reading / storytelling
- mathematics
- sand / water / sensory
- investigation / understanding the world
- outdoor gross motor and exploratory spaces.

Resources in continuous provision will:

- be stored at child height where appropriate
- be clearly organised and, where useful, labelled with words and images
- include a balance of open-ended and structured materials
- be familiar enough to support independence
- be maintained, rotated and replenished carefully.

### **Adult role in continuous provision**

Adults are expected to:

- observe sensitively and identify significant learning
- join children's play without dominating it
- model language, routines, vocabulary and thinking
- scaffold learning and extend ideas
- support children to solve problems, negotiate, create and persevere
- use sustained shared thinking to deepen understanding.

Staff should not stand back as passive supervisors. Their role is active, thoughtful and purposeful.

## **13. Enhanced Provision**

Enhanced provision refers to temporary, carefully planned additions to continuous provision that are designed to deepen or extend learning, introduce new ideas and respond to assessment information, children's interests or curriculum priorities.

Enhancements should:

- have a clear learning intention or developmental purpose
- connect to current teaching, children's fascinations or identified gaps
- remain open enough to invite curiosity, talk and exploration
- be reviewed regularly to ensure they are useful and relevant.

When planning enhancements, staff will consider:

- which area of learning is being strengthened
- which children or groups need additional support, practice or challenge
- whether the enhancement is accessible for children with SEND and EAL
- what adult interaction, modelling or vocabulary will be needed.

## **14. Outdoor Provision**

Outdoor learning is an integral and statutory part of our EYFS provision and is available daily except where weather conditions make this unsafe. The outdoor environment is not an add-on or break from learning; it is a core teaching space planned with the same ambition and intentionality as the indoor environment.

Our outdoor provision is expected to:

- reflect and extend all seven areas of learning
- provide opportunities for physical challenge, exploration, collaboration and imaginative play

- support language development, problem-solving and risk assessment
- include both structured resources and open-ended materials, such as loose parts
- allow children to revisit and apply prior learning in different contexts.

Outdoor provision will include opportunities for:

- gross motor development
- digging, building and transporting
- investigation of weather, nature and the wider world
- large-scale creative work
- storytelling and communication
- sensory play
- mathematics and mark making in meaningful contexts.

### **Adult expectations outdoors**

Adults outdoors will:

- supervise actively and purposefully
- build children's vocabulary and thinking through interaction
- support safe risk-taking and problem-solving
- notice and respond to teachable moments
- ensure that outdoor learning is progressive, inclusive and meaningful.

## **15. Assessment**

Assessment is continuous, proportionate and based on staff knowledge of children through interaction and observation. It is used to:

- identify strengths and needs
- inform teaching and provision
- plan next steps

Assessment is reviewed regularly. Where progress is not in line with expectations, staff take prompt action to adapt provision, provide timely intervention and targeted support.

The school does not use excessive tracking or attempt to record all learning.

Statutory assessments (RBA and EYFS Profile) are completed in line with national requirements.

## **16. Recording and Evidence of Learning**

At Bitterne Manor, recording should support learning, professional reflection and communication with families; it should not create unnecessary workload or distract staff from interacting with children.

We do **not** aim to record everything. Instead, each child has a **special book** which captures significant learning over time. These books provide a clear picture of children's development, attainment and next steps and are used as part of professional dialogue with parents and colleagues.

**Recording must support learning and must not reduce time spent interacting with children.**

### **Recording expectations**

Staff are expected to ensure that:

- each child's special book contains the agreed minimum number of significant pieces of learning for each half term
- evidence reflects a broad picture of the child over time rather than an attempt to collect everything

- recorded pieces are selected because they show something important about progress, independence, language, application or next steps
- recording is balanced across adult-led and child-initiated learning where appropriate
- observations are concise, useful and linked to curriculum thinking or development.

Recording may include:

- annotated work
- photographs with short explanatory captions
- brief adult observations
- examples of mark making, writing, mathematics or other recorded outcomes
- evidence from continuous provision where this captures significant learning.

### **Principles for recording**

- quality is more important than quantity
- the special book should show progress over time
- recording must be manageable and sustainable for staff
- evidence should inform teaching, not drive it
- significant moments in communication, independence, personal development and application of learning should be included, not only finished products.

## **17. Inclusion**

Inclusion is embedded in daily practice. Staff adapt environments, teaching and interactions to ensure all children can access learning.

Support for SEND follows the graduated approach: assess, plan, do, review.

Adaptations may include:

- changes to environment
- targeted adult support
- adapted resources
- additional practice opportunities

Staff support children with EAL through modelling language and providing opportunities for talk, while valuing home language.

Leaders monitor outcomes to ensure all groups make progress.

See SEND Policy for more information.

## **18. Behaviour and Self-Regulation**

Children are supported to develop self-regulation through consistent routines, clear expectations and supportive adult interactions.

Adults model behaviour, support conflict resolution and help children develop independence in managing emotions and behaviour.

The environment promotes calm, purposeful learning and sustained engagement.

See Behaviour Policy for more information.

## **19. Safeguarding and Welfare**

Safeguarding is embedded in daily practice and is the responsibility of all staff.

Staff:

- know how to identify and report concerns
- understand low-level concerns procedures
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries

Filtering and monitoring systems are in place and reviewed regularly.

All staff receive regular safeguarding training and understand current statutory guidance. Staff act immediately if they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare, following school procedures and local safeguarding arrangements.

See Safeguarding Policy for more information.

## 20. Staffing

The school ensures that adults working with children are suitable, qualified where required, and appropriately deployed. Safer recruitment procedures are followed in line with statutory guidance, including obtaining references and carrying out relevant pre-employment checks. Providers must ensure that only suitable individuals are recruited and that safeguarding procedures include this.

All staff receive induction and ongoing training appropriate to their roles. Supervision and professional dialogue are used to support staff practice, safeguarding awareness and professional development.

### Staff:child ratios

The school maintains statutory adult-to-child ratios at all times. For children aged 3 and over:

- where a person with QTS, EYPS, EYTS or another approved level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there must be at least **1 member of staff for every 13 children**
- where such a person is not working directly with the children, there must be at least **1 member of staff for every 8 children.**

For Reception classes in maintained schools and academies, infant class size legislation applies and classes are limited to **30 children per school teacher.**

The school also ensures that staffing arrangements meet children's needs, support safe supervision and reflect the qualifications required under the current EYFS framework and qualification requirements.

## 21. Health

We promote the good health of children, including oral health, healthy eating and safe routines. Meals, snacks and drinks provided by the school are healthy, balanced and nutritious, and providers must have regard to the **EYFS nutrition guidance.** Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible.

### Safer eating

While children are eating, there will always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate for a full course consistent with Annex A of the EYFS framework. Staff supervise eating carefully and create calm routines that reduce the risk of choking and promote independence safely.

### Medication

Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist will be administered, in line with the school's Administering Medication Policy. Appropriate records are maintained and parents are informed in accordance with policy and statutory expectations.

### Oral health

The school promotes good oral health, including through teaching children:

- the importance of brushing their teeth
- the effects of eating too many sweet foods

- wider healthy lifestyle habits.

## 22. Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

The school provides a safe and suitable environment for all children. Daily checks are carried out on indoor and outdoor spaces, resources and equipment so that hazards are identified and dealt with promptly. The EYFS environment must be clean, well maintained, organised and fit for purpose.

The school ensures that:

- furniture, resources and equipment are safe and suitable
- fire exits and evacuation routes are clear
- children are supervised appropriately
- there are suitable hygienic changing facilities where required
- children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs during changing and toileting
- there is adequate provision for confidential conversations with parents and carers.

Risk assessment is part of daily practice. The school follows wider health and safety procedures and fire safety arrangements in conjunction with the EYFS requirements.

See Health and Safety Policy for more information.

## 23. Paediatric First Aid, Accidents and Injuries

At least one person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. Certificates are renewed every three years in line with statutory criteria.

At Bitterne Manor:

- any accident or injury involving a child is reported to parents on the same day via Medical Tracker
- any first aid treatment administered is also reported to parents
- accidents and injuries are recorded on Medical Tracker in line with school procedures
- serious accidents, illnesses, injuries or deaths are reported to Ofsted and other agencies within required timescales.

See First Aid Policy for more information.

## 24. Information and Records

The school maintains records and shares relevant information appropriately in order to keep children safe, support learning and meet legal duties. Confidential information and records about staff and children are held securely and are accessible only to those who have a right or professional need to see them. Staff understand their responsibility to protect privacy and confidentiality.

In EYFS this includes, as appropriate:

- admission and contact information
- emergency contact details
- attendance information
- safeguarding and welfare records
- health and medical information
- assessment information
- records of accidents, first aid and medication
- transition information shared with receiving teachers and settings.

## 25. Parental Involvement

We recognise that children learn and develop best when there is a strong partnership between school and home. Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators, and we are committed to involving them in their child's early education. Parents are supported to understand how to support learning at home, particularly in communication, early reading and mathematics.

We keep parents and carers informed through:

- daily informal communication where appropriate
- planned parent consultations
- discussion of progress, development and next steps
- sharing of significant learning in children's special books
- opportunities to engage in workshops, stay-and-play sessions, parent events and home learning.

The key person supports this relationship and helps families access specialist services where appropriate. We want all parents and carers to feel welcomed, listened to and involved.

## 26. Transition

We recognise that transitions are a significant part of a young child's experience and can have a lasting impact on confidence, wellbeing and readiness to learn. They support continuity in learning and prepare children for the expectations of the next stage. Transitions are therefore planned carefully and managed sensitively.

### Starting Ducklings

To support children starting Ducklings, we provide:

- an open afternoon / stay-and-play opportunity in the summer term for September starters
- tours and meetings for families joining at other points in the year
- a transition booklet with photographs of staff and the environment
- opportunities for families to share important information about their child before admission.

### Transition from Ducklings to Reception

Ducklings and Reception staff work closely throughout the year to ensure continuity of pedagogy, routines and expectations. This includes:

- Reception staff spending time in Ducklings with the children
- detailed handover meetings
- stay-and-play sessions
- home visits where these remain part of the school's agreed transition arrangements
- phased entry into Reception where appropriate and in discussion with parents.

### Transition to Year 1

Transition from Reception to Year 1 is planned to ensure continuity and a gradual move into Key Stage 1. This includes:

- Year 1 teachers spending time in Reception
- shared activities and transition days
- professional discussions between Reception and Year 1 staff about each child's attainment, wellbeing and next steps
- use of EYFS Profile outcomes to inform the Year 1 curriculum.

## 27. Monitoring and Review

The EYFS Leader and senior leaders monitor the quality of provision and the impact of the curriculum regularly. Monitoring is used to ensure that practice is consistent, that statutory duties are met and that the policy is reflected in daily provision. Monitoring leads to clear actions, staff development and improvements in provision and outcomes for children.

Monitoring may include:

- learning walks
- observation of adult interactions
- scrutiny of environments, provision and children's special books
- review of assessment information and outcomes
- review of safeguarding, attendance and welfare practice
- staff discussion, supervision and coaching.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance, school systems or provision. It will be approved by the headteacher and shared with the governing board.