



## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM POLICY

### Introduction

Our Early Years Department follows the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is the curriculum that is set by the British government which all schools in England must follow. 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (DfE, 2021) The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is for children from birth to age 5.

Early Years is an important part of a child's life as it sets a foundation for their future learning and will prepare them for Primary school when they turn five years old.

The EYFS supports a child's development, their experiences should be happy, safe and exciting, allowing children to develop at their own rate and pace.

We seek the highest standards of attainment for all our children and aim to foster creativity in our children and to help them become independent learners. Above all we believe in making learning fun.

### Core values

Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values that we hold dear at our school. The curriculum is how the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to lead fulfilling lives.

The main values of our school, upon which we have based our curriculum are:

- Commitment
- Kindness
- Honesty
- Respect

### **The core values that make up The Four Pillars of the BST**

### Aim and objectives.

In our Early years department, we understand the importance of children's personal, emotional and social development. Our aim is to help all the children to work together, become independent, to be enthusiastic learners and take on new challenges.

At the BST We will

- Provide challenging activities that will ensure the children are happy, safe and stimulated.
- Provide opportunities that enable choice and self confidence that will help further learning and development in Key stage 1.
- Help each child progress at their own pace. We observe children's individual needs and what they can do enabling us to focus on the children's next steps. We use Tapestry as an assessment tool and use ongoing and formalised observations enabling us to focus on children's next steps.
- Build positive partnerships with parents to ensure good relationships when supporting their child.
- Provide learning provisions within the setting which are sensitive to all children's individual needs including those who have additional needs.
- Enable all children to learn, and develop their skills, to the best of their ability.
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning.

- Teach children the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking.
- Appreciate and value the contribution made by all ethnic groups in our multi-cultural society.
- Help children understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all.
- Enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to live and work cooperatively with others.

### **Staffing and Organisation**

In our Early Years department, we have one Playgroup class (20 months-3 years), two Nursery classes (3-4 years) and, Reception classes (4-5 years)

Our playgroup classroom has its own bathroom with a changing area. It has its own dedicated outdoor area, and the playgroup children have daily access to the Early Years main playground. There is also a separate room where the children eat and sleep.

Our Playgroup has a full-time teacher who is supported by one full time assistants.

There are two Nursery classrooms that share a bathroom, the classrooms have a variety of free choice provision, and the children have easy access to the main playground. The nursery children eat their lunch in the school dining room.

There are two full time teachers who are supported by one assistant.

Our two Reception classrooms have their own dedicated outdoor area which children use throughout the day as part of their learning. They also use the Early Years main playground twice times a day. The Reception children also eat their lunch in the school dining room.

There are two full time teachers who are supported by one assistant.

Staff are organised to support the children with a balance of adult led and child-initiated experiences throughout the sessions and the children have free flow access to outdoor learning and provision.

Our experienced team plan a variety of exciting learning opportunities each day as well as responding to unplanned themes or topics that interest the children.

### **How do we teach children in the EYFS?**

In Early Years, you may see children playing alone or with their peers, deciding on resources and choosing how to spend their time. You may see a child playing and listening to an adult, who is modelling how to achieve something or teaching a new skill that interests the child.

Adults may scaffold a children's play. This involves taking their play to higher levels of learning, entering the play as a co-creator, and helping to provoke a framework for the children to go from "what they know" to "what else they could know"! Scaffolding enables a child to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which is just beyond his or her abilities.

During play, where foundation social and emotional skills are developed, scaffolding is a bridge to new skill levels using three key ingredients; modelling the skill, giving clues and asking questions while the child is trying out a new skill, and then as the child approaches mastery, withdrawing the support.

The new statutory framework does not prescribe a particular teaching approach. The DfE (2021) state in the framework that "Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they

learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

### **The statutory EYFS framework**

#### **Learning and developing**

The Early Learning Goals (ELGs) are the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the time they reach the age of five.

There are three prime areas of learning:

**Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional, Physical development**

There are four core areas of learning:

**Literacy, Maths, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design**

Activities and the learning environment are carefully planned for around the children's own interest and needs. Learning is done through play, enabling children to learn and gain their knowledge and understanding, in a mixture of adult-initiated and adult led activities.

The child's development is observed and assessed throughout their time in the Early Years department. If at any point a child is not making progress in any of the prime areas this will be discussed with the child's parents and steps to support them put in place.

Please click on the link to see the Early learning goals.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1109972/Early\\_Years\\_Foundation\\_Stage\\_profile\\_2023\\_handbook.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1109972/Early_Years_Foundation_Stage_profile_2023_handbook.pdf)

#### **Characteristics of effective learning**

In addition, the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

**Playing and exploring-engagement**

**Active learning-motivation**

**Creating and thinking-critically thinking**

Children learn in lots of different ways and the EYFS recognises this. So, it is important that we consider this when we are planning the learning environment. We take into consideration that all children are different and know when it is necessary to support individual children as well as groups of children.

### **Planning**

In the Early Year department planning is based on themes around initial themes or stories but is then allowed to develop in one way or another, considering the interests of children, enabling us to focus on the children's next steps.

We also focus on planning a stimulating environment inside and outside that takes into account the children's interests and needs. We plan a variety of activities that aim to meet the objectives in the foundation stage, giving the children the opportunities to learn through a mixture of child-led and adult-initiated play.

In our reception classes there is more of a focus on Literacy and Maths planning to ensure the children are ready for a smooth transition to Key Stage 1 and its more formal methods of teaching.

We plan our curriculum in three phases. We agree a long-term plan for each year group. This indicates what topics are to be taught in each year. We review this long-term plan on an annual basis.

Through our medium-term plans i.e. termly and half-yearly we give guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies for each topic.

Our short-term plans are those that our teachers write on a weekly or daily basis to identify what resources and activities are going to be used.

We plan the activities carefully, so that there is coherent and full coverage of all aspects of the early learning goals, and there is planned progression in all curriculum areas.

### **Effective Teaching and Learning**

We encourage the children to guide us in shaping their learning experiences. The staff discuss with the children about what they are interested in and which skills they would like to develop further. We develop children's curiosity and encourage inquisitiveness and a hunger for learning and find ways to answer the children's many questions! We provide a challenging, exciting, and attractive learning environment that offers high-quality opportunities for the children to learn through play within the classroom and outside. The children are supported to explore how resources can be adapted and use their skills in a variety of contexts. We develop problem-solving skills through open-ended tasks and encourage children to share their thinking with others.

### **Teaching in the EYFS:**

- Has a carefully planned curriculum which aims for all children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS.
- Involves creating adult and child-initiated opportunities that will encourage children to explore, create, investigate, rehearse, practise, repeat and discover.
- Involves developing Characteristics of Effective Learning
- Uses a multi-sensory, fun and play-based approach.
- Shows awareness of the different ways and rates by which children develop and learn; that there are many factors affecting achievement including ability, emotional state, age and maturity, and how this informs the appropriate teaching strategies.
- Has a high expectation of children's behaviour and attainment.
- Recognises the importance of emotional well-being.
- Is outside as much as possible ensuring children take ownership of their learning.

### **Observation and Assessment**

During the children's first half term in the staff assesses each child's development and learning attainment against the criteria set out in Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals. It is also a time for the teacher to discover the unique personality and interests of each child.

In Early Years staff use a range of strategies to gather information about the children's learning and development. We use observation as our main form of assessment, and 'wow' moments are recorded in a learning journal online called 'Tapestry'. Tapestry is a secure online journal which builds on children's experiences during their time with us. It enables parents to view work from school and find out how their child is doing online. Parents can share pictures/videos with school in order to inform our planning and assessments of children. Tapestry information is stored on a highly secure server which is monitored closely, and the software can be accessed from a desktop PC or via smartphone app for Android and Apple devices. Keeping children safe online is extremely important to us at the

BST. Therefore, we ask parents to sign an agreement and other information to show that they understand and agree with our guidelines whilst using Tapestry.

The children's learning is monitored and sometimes observed through photographs, notes & videos. Some literacy or maths learning may be recorded in books or files or on display in the classroom. Teachers constantly use their professional judgement to decide what a child is achieving and what they need to do next. The staff watch the children interacting through their play & learning, we model and guide to support the children and assess the children using the non-statutory framework 'Development Matters 2021'. Observations are completed individually and in groups and by all team members.

Staff are available on a daily basis to speak to staff about their child's day. Meetings are called with parents if we have any cause for concerns. Parents are also encouraged to ask for meetings if there is anything they would like to discuss.

We have regular termly parents' meetings take place to ensure parents/carers are informed of their child's progress and next steps in learning. Parents receive an annual report that offers detailed comments on each child's progress in each area of learning and their Characteristics of Effective Learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs.

### **The Learning Environment**

A rich and varied 'enabling' environment is actively planned for and continuously developed with varied multi-cultural and inclusive resources to encourage exploratory play-based learning and challenge. The learning environment encompasses both indoor and outdoor provision, which are of equal importance. Children are encouraged to experience all areas of the learning environment. We encourage children to plan their own selection of activities balanced with adult initiated activities. At different times of the day the children have access to the inside and outside environment, ensuring that all children explore and learn safely. There are areas where children can be creative, be quiet and be active.

Our classrooms all have a reading/quiet area, funky fingers table, art area. Playdough and writing equipment are accessible throughout the day.

### **Outdoor learning**

Outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the Early Years and it has a positive impact on children's development. Being outdoors offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active.

It also offers opportunities to do things in different ways and on different scales compared to indoors. Our outdoor environment provides a range of resources and activities for children to explore and we try to ensure each of the areas of learning are incorporated into the outdoor environment each day.

### **Teaching of phonics**

At the BST we currently follow the phased structure of the Letters and Sounds phonics framework. To support this teaching sequence we use a variety of high quality resources to support children's learning. These include ICT based resources. In Reception, discreet phonics sessions are taught separately for each year group where children receive a 20-minute phonics session each day. We cover 2 new sounds per week and practise these sounds in a number of different ways. Within the sessions, children learn to blend sounds and segment words into sounds for reading and spelling. Sessions are multi-sensory and active and allow the children to consolidate their learning as well as learning new sounds and skills. Each week the children are given the sounds to practise at home and consolidate learning...this is a valuable tool in informing parents about what has been learnt in school. We ask parents to practise reading these graphemes every time that they hear their child read.

Alongside the teaching of letter sounds, children are taught 'Action' words. These words are sent home too. At the end of each half term, children are assessed to check that they are confident with the sounds they have covered before the teacher moves them on to the next set of sounds. Both the use of phonics and 'action words' are integrated throughout the curriculum.

### **Working with Parents/ carers**

We recognise the importance of working alongside parents during a child's education. We do this through: -

- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Inviting parents in to watch our monthly assemblies.
- Inviting parents into school at the end of each term to watch the children perform in shows.
- Inviting parents into participating in family mornings where parents can join in with activities.
- Inviting parents to workshops to support children's learning at home.
- Providing formal meetings for parents during the school year to discuss children's progress.
- Welcoming parents to discuss any concerns with the teacher and/or teaching assistants.
- Working to build good relationships with families to promote a regular two-way flow of information.

### **Transition**

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily.

At the BST, we want to make the beginning of the child's school years a memorable and happy experience.

When children start in our playgroup class, we stagger the intake over the first two-three weeks in September, splitting the children into three separate groups, allowing us to manage the first few days sensitively and enabling us to get to know the child as an individual.

To ensure each new day is a positive and welcoming one, we recommend that all children starting in Early years are introduced slowly and gradually. We find that new children settle in quickly if they gradually build up to a full day attendance. Some children will be ready for a full day very quickly and others will take a while longer.

As we are aware that all children are different, and some children may take longer than others, below is an ideal plan of the times we would like the child to start gradually building up to a full day.

### **Children starting in our playgroup class (20 months-3 years)**

Day 1	Children to stay for an hour. (9.30 until 10.30)
Day 2	Children to stay for two hours (9.30 to 11:30)
Day 3	Children to stay for lunch (9.00 to 12.30)
Day 4	Children to stay for lunch and to sleep (9.00 to 14.30)
Day 5	Children to stay a full day (9.00-3.00)

### **Children starting in our Nursery classes (3 years-4 years)**

Day 1	Children to stay for two hours (9.30 to 11:30)
Day 2	Children to stay for lunch (9.00 to 1.30)
Day 3	Children to stay a full day (9.00-3.00)

### **Children starting in our Reception classes. (4 years-5 years)**

Day 1 Children to stay from 9.30 to 12:00

Our reception children are welcome to join us on the second day for a full day, if a child is finding it difficult parents will be contacted to discuss adapting the school to meet the child's needs.

### **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals at The BST 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 all of our children will achieve their 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 and outside agencies. See our separate whole school Inclusion policy.

### **Safeguarding**

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them." (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At The BST, we understand that we are legally required to comply with the steps providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

These are:

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose for which it was intended.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Keeping Safe**

It is important to us that all children in the school are "safe." We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See The BST's Safeguarding Policy.) All staff are aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and staff training is updated regularly. Any disclosures that are made are reported to the DSL immediately.

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