



Birches First School  
Believe, Grow, Succeed ...  
...to be the best 'me' I can be.



## Early Years Foundation Stage- EYFS

### Intent- Introduction

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Birches First School, we offer a curriculum rich in wonder and memorable experiences. We work hard to provide a stimulating environment that provides exciting opportunities, promotes challenge, exploration, adventure, and a real love of learning.

It is our intent that all children develop physically, verbally, cognitively, and emotionally in an environment which values all cultures, communities, and people. We aim for our children to be confident and independent, to believe in themselves and interact positively with others. We understand that play is an integral part of learning, and this is at the heart of our Early Years curriculum. We believe that the correct mix of adult -directed and uninterrupted child-initiated play ensures the best outcomes for pupils.

Our enabling environment and warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration. As the pupils move into Reception, we invest time and energy into helping pupils set and reflect on their own goals by aiming high and developing a love of reading, writing and number. Our intention is to deliver a holistic curriculum which maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences, and also promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking, following children's interests and ideas. We value imagination and creativity and seek to create a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning through a vibrant continuous indoor and outdoor provision, alongside visits, enrichment days and regular sessions in our outdoor 'forest'.

We recognise the crucial role that Early Year's education has to play, in providing firm foundations upon which the rest of a child's education is successfully based, particularly in developing a love of reading as we believe this is the key to unlocking future life-long learning. Our curriculum is therefore the cultural capital we know our pupils need so that they can gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they require for success. They can only do that if we embed the right habits for learning through the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning (COETL) – Play and Exploration, Active Learning and Creative and Critical Thinking.

### Implementation- curriculum organisation & teaching approaches.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of one Nursery class and one Reception class: Both classes operate with free flow opportunities to access indoor and outdoor learning with enhanced continuous provision that enable us to follow and provoke children's interests, promote high levels of engagement and positive interactions within their learning environment.

The curriculum is planned in a cross-curricular way to enable all aspects of the children's development including understanding the world and expressive art and design, as well as to promote sustained thinking and active learning. During continuous provision the children engage and learn through a balance of planned provision and provocations, and child-led play opportunities with children choosing their own resources and how they wish to interact with them.

Adults are highly skilled to guide and support children to ensure their all-round development is facilitated and challenged. Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together but we have a range of additional intervention and support to enhance and scaffold children who may not be reaching their potential or moving on children who are doing very well. This includes, for example, 'time for talk' in Nursery and the NELI programme in Reception with some of our vulnerable children. The characteristics of effective teaching and learning are also viewed as an integral part of all areas of learning and are reflected in our observations of children.

### **Promoting a love of reading**

In Nursery, children participate in phase one phonics sessions, 'time to talk' small group interventions which support the development of communication and language. Reception class participate in daily phonics sessions delivered through 'Little Wandle', a synthetic systematic phonics program. In Nursery we plan daily 'basic skills' activities specifically develop their fine motor skills, mark making and early writing opportunities, which enable all children to learn new skills, embed knowledge and transfer skills through playing and exploring.

Literacy is embedded in daily story sessions throughout EYFS, with specific outcomes to ensure children develop a love of reading and storytelling opportunities. Supportive initiatives such as 'tales toolkit' and 'talk4writing' are explored in groups sessions to ensure children have positive and engaging opportunities. The government has set out clear guidance, and information to support and enhance reading for pleasure and embed vital literacy skills in the EYFS and throughout their educational journey beyond EYFS.

Core texts, daily storytelling and non-fiction literature has been carefully selected for Nursery and Reception to promote and plan learning opportunities alongside themes and topics. These can be located within the EYFS long term planning (LTP). Children's interests of particular stories, settings, characters within themes are adaptable in EYFS to maintain interest and ensure the book becomes a secure 'hook' for their enjoyment and learning within literacy, communication, and language development.

'The Reading Framework'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-reading-framework-teaching-the-foundations-of-literacy>

At Birches First School we meet the welfare requirements detailed in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and actively safeguard and promote the welfare of all of our children. We prioritise creating a 'language rich' environment through the use of songs, nursery rhymes, stories and providing time for quality interactions between peers/adults and peers/peers. Trained staff understand that interactions should be positive and progressive, allowing children to flourish and gather words at pace in order to become happy chatters and confident communicators. In EYFS our children are encouraged to become early readers through

enjoyment of books and build their skills through quality story time and throughout the systematic teaching of phonics supported by Little Wandle scheme within Reception.

## Marvellous Mathematicians

Mathematics at Birches First School is taught alongside our own long-term plan which has been adapted from the White Rose Scheme of Learning, ensuring that age-appropriate skills are embedded to ensure children progress successfully towards the Early Learning Goals. Our long-term plan strives to support children in EYFS to become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics, to be able to reason and to solve problems.

White Rose provides guidance to help pupils to become ***'Visualisers'** – using the CPA approach to help pupils understand mathematics and to make connections between different representations. **'Describers'** – to place great emphasis on mathematical language and questioning so pupils can discuss the mathematics they are doing, and so support them to take ideas further **'Experimenters'** – as well as being fluent mathematicians, we want pupils to love and learn more about mathematics'* <https://whiterosemaths.com/latest-news/wrm-curriculum-the-new-ofsted-framework-your-questions-answered/>

Birches First School ensures that mathematics is relevant and applicable to the needs of our children. Through the mastery approach, it allows children time to explore concepts and become fluent in a number of ways rather than just recite number facts. Our long-term plan is adapted throughout the year and lessons are structured to meet the needs of the children. All pupils in EYFS learn maths through a variety of games and tasks using concrete manipulatives which are then rehearsed and applied to their own learning during exploration.

Ten Town is highly favoured by the children in EYFS and is used to support number recognition and writing numerals through engaging songs, characters, rhymes, and ICT based games in order for children to become marvellous mathematicians, embedding clear mathematical language within their play and learning. These early mathematical experiences are carefully designed to help pupils remember the content they have been taught and to support them with integrating their new knowledge across the breadth of their experiences and into larger concepts.

## Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

We have built our school environment to enable our children to strengthen their core muscles through physical play. Children spend daily time outdoors in their natural environment in all weathers. In EYFS they develop wonderful, exploratory, sensory experiences in our mud kitchen, gross motor building area and weekly sessions in our woodland area engaging in large scale den building and exploring nature in a variety of ways. Our learning environment is adaptable in order to reflect children's interests and progression. Our stimulating environments both inside and outside of the classroom provide engaging activities which children can access independently. Children demonstrate their attitudes and behaviours to learning through the different characteristics of effective teaching and learning (COETL). Staff facilitate this by immersing our children in lots of practical, play-based learning activities through which they are encouraged to explore, experiment and develop. The children are supported to learn to work together, manage their feelings and ask questions through skilled adult facilitated play.

In Early Years our enabling environment and all our interactions and routines are intentional as adults continually observe, assess, plan and do.

The curriculum is taught through half termly learning themes and key texts as well as consulting with the children to ensure we follow their interests, which are enriched with classroom enhancements, trips and visitors (covid-19 restrictions currently apply presently), ensuring cultural capital for all of our pupils.

Over the course of each half term the children will engage in planned activities, experiencing things first-hand to broaden and deepen their knowledge and understanding thus giving them opportunities to apply new skills in their daily learning. The planned activities in EYFS are the 'hook' to ensure children have broad and balanced experiences within the EYFS framework, which are then expertly supported by the adults to ensure the children's ideas and interests are fully embraced and valued to ensure they have some ownership of how the 'hook' will develop and evolve.

The key texts in the half termly learning themes are chosen carefully to encourage children's speech, language, and communication development. All planning, however, is flexible and responsive to children's needs and inclusive of all pupils so plans can be changed and adapted dependent on children's needs and interests. We understand the importance of parental engagement and believe that our parents have a crucial role to play in their children's education.

We work hard to create strong partnerships between home and school. Parents receive curriculum overviews each half term, detailing the learning theme to inform them of what their child is learning alongside homework grids to support and enhance the transfer of skills from school to home and build on prior learning or extend new interests and experiences.

Parents in EYFS enjoy using Tapestry to engage in their child's learning with regular contact with them via memos and observations. We recognise the importance of preparing our pupils for the next phase in their learning journey and we begin to adapt the structure of and routines of our day in the second half of the Summer Term to support them with their transition.

### **Fundamental British Values in Early Years**

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the Early Years.

#### **Democracy: making decisions together**

As part of the focus in Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) adults will encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, encouraging children to know their views count, value each other's views and values and talk about their feelings, for example when they do or do not need help. In EYFS adults support the children to demonstrate democracy in action as they are encouraged to share views on what the topics themes, story focus or role play enhancements. Children can demonstrate their choices and views with a show of hands or hands on resources being placed into voting containers. Adults will support the decisions that children

make and provide activities that involve turn taking, sharing and collaboration. Children will be given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued!

### **Rule of law: understanding rules**

As part of the PSED adults in EYFS will ensure that children understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences and learn to distinguish right from wrong. All children are taught Birches 'Golden Expectations' with age-appropriate visual cues displayed in each classroom for reminders. Adults may collaborate with children to create class expectations and the codes of behaviour, for example, to agree the expectations about tidying up when the music plays or hands up when wishing to contribute ideas and ensure that all children understand each expectation apply to everyone.

### **Individual liberty: freedom for all**

As part of the focus on PSED and Understanding the World (UW) children will be supported to develop a positive sense of themselves. Adults will provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, talking about their experiences, and learning. Adults will encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example in a small group discuss what they feel about starting school and leaving their grown up at the gate.

### **Mutual respect and tolerance: treat others as you would like to be treated**

As part of the focus in PSED and UW adults will consistently create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures, and races are valued, and children are engaged with the wider community. Children should acquire a tolerance and appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures; know about similarities and differences between themselves and others and among families, faiths, communities, cultures, and traditions and share and discuss practices, celebrations and experiences.

At Birches First School adults encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting others' opinions. In EYFS adults promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping. The EYFS learning environment actively promotes multi-faith through notices, pictures, stories and images available and visually displayed within the EYFS learning environment and promoted throughout specific learning opportunities and topic enhancements.

### **At Birches First school it is not acceptable if we:**

- actively promoting intolerance of other faiths, cultures, and races.
- fail to challenge gender stereotypes and routinely segregate girls and boys.



- isolate children from their wider community.
- fail to challenge behaviours (whether of staff, children, or parents) that are not in line with the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

### **Impact- Assessment & Monitoring**

As part of the teaching and learning process, children complete a baseline assessment in the first half term, this enables staff to plan the provision effectively to meet each of the children's needs. In our nursery class the children's baseline is supported by a communication and language-based intervention programme- 'time to talk'. Observations and interactions also ensure we understand the children's starting points in nursery across all seven areas within Development Matters (DM) and judge if the children are secure using 'DM- birth to three' as our guidance document.

In our Reception class children are required to complete the Statutory Reception Baseline (RBA). Children are assessed in relation to their progress towards Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals within the new framework 2021. These judgements are made on the basis of accumulative observations and in-depth knowledge of the children acquired through ongoing assessment. Our regular monitoring of teaching and learning includes highly skilled adults who can observe, scaffold, facilitate, and challenge the children's interactions, develop their curiosity, and promote sustained shared thinking with skilled questioning.

Ongoing assessments are used to inform planning and immediate next steps in teaching and learning for all children throughout the year. Half termly analysis of summative tracking and observations uploaded onto each child's online learning journal 'Tapestry' as flagged areas of learning. It also identifies groups of children who need small group opportunities, keep up sessions or further support with specific areas of learning which are included in our planning, particularly those identified as Pupil Premium or with SEND.

Our curriculum and its delivery ensure that children make good progress. During their time in our EYFS, children make good progress so that we meet the national expectation for GLD at the end of the year. Pupils also make good progress toward their age-related expectations before transitioning into Year One. We believe our high standards are due to the enriched play-based exploration alongside the rigour of assessment and teaching the children as they move through the early years – a rich diet of balanced learning experiences is undoubtedly the best way to develop happy, curious children. Children develop their characteristics of effective teaching and learning and are able to apply their knowledge to a range of situations making links and explaining their ideas and understanding. Children are confident to take risks and discuss their successes and failures with peers and adults drawing on their experiences to improve or adjust what they are doing. Our curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure relevance and to ensure the voices of our pupils, parents, staff and governors are heard.

**Statutory GLD assessment for EYFS are above National from 2014 - 2019**