



Burford School and Nursery

'Enjoy, Achieve, Succeed Together'

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Date policy adopted by Governing Body: September 2025	Date of next review: September 2026
This policy will be subject to review every year by the Governing Body or more frequently in the light of changes in legislation	

At Burford School, the EYFS team are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage as outlined in the statutory framework 2025.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up' Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Department for Education, 2025)

Introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Burford School, children can join us from the term after they turn three. Our Nursery class (Acorns) has capacity for 26 full-time children and our 2 Reception classes have capacity for 60 children.

At Burford School we value the importance that EYFS plays in developing the foundations for future learning and development. EYFS has a pivotal role in preparing children for life.

Our Aims

At Burford School, our aims are:

- To provide a learning environment where there is a friendly, supportive, and inviting atmosphere in which every child feels secure, valued and confident.
- To develop and establish the building blocks of learning, to create a strong foundation for the development of independent lifelong learning.
- To provide a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum that is planned around the needs and interests of every child and is informed by the use of ongoing observational assessments.
- To empower our children to be independent, well-rounded individuals who have a love of learning and seek challenge in everything that they do.
- To encourage parental involvement and strive for an open-door approach, recognising that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators.
- To promote good quality partnerships between the school, children, parents/carers, and outside agencies to ensure the development of each child.
- To support each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally through high expectations, praise, consistency and positivity.

The Early Years Curriculum

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways** and at different rates.

As a school, we recognise the uniqueness of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and actively promote the use of play as the primary vehicle for learning. We plan for an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning. This is to enable the children to achieve their full potential.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are the three prime areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language

- Physical Development

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Children's knowledge, skills and understanding within each area of the curriculum will be developed through a combination of teacher-led learning, supported and guided group time, play-based learning, and time to develop their knowledge and skills independently.

Adults in the EYFS will support and scaffold pupils' learning to enable them to reach their full potential. There will be a wide range of opportunities for children to develop and progress independently through play-based learning known as 'Areas of Continuous Provision'. Every day the children will experience a balance between group-focused activities and independent (or supported) access to the continuous provision.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin learning and development across all areas. At Burford School we consider the three characteristics when observing what the children are learning, how they are learning and where to take the learning next. We recognise that the Characteristics of Effective Learning describe factors which play a central role in both a child's learning and how they become an effective learner.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

- Playing and Exploring – *children investigate, explore and 'have a go'*
- Active learning – *children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements*
- Creating and thinking critically - *children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things*

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication, and physical development.

At the beginning of the year, information about the areas of the curriculum we are covering is put onto the school website for parents and carers to access. This is updated as the year progresses. This allows parents and carers to see which activities will be covered and is a vital tool for parents to begin discussions with their child about what they are doing in school.

The Learning Environment

In Reception, we have an intake of 60 children, which is split into two classes of 30 children. Each class has a teacher and a full time teaching assistant.

The EYFS setting operates both a class-based space and a 'free-flow' system, allowing the children opportunities throughout the day to engage in activities freely (within both the indoor and outdoor learning spaces). It is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely, whilst encouraging independence. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet and rest. It is set out so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The classrooms and outdoor area are arranged so that all aspects of the EYFS are accessible. There is a real focus on the Characteristics of Effective Learning, with a strong link to both our school values and the ways to use our 'Burford Body'. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Both indoor and outdoor areas reflect each other. They are planned with a rotation of resources and activities that are challenging and achievable.

Forest School

At Burford, Forest school is an outdoor learning experience, which offers endless opportunities for children to learn and develop in a natural outdoor environment. The ethos of the Forest School is to provide a safe and exciting learning experience for children in an outdoor woodland environment, which assists in all areas of children's development. Physical and behavioural boundaries are established at the beginning of the programme to ensure the safety of the children is paramount.

The aims of the Forest School are:

- To offer children a holistic approach to learning
- To offer children time and space to develop within themselves
- To encourage personal, social and emotional development as well as all areas of the EYFS
- To build the children's self-confidence and self-esteem
- To encourage teamwork and risk-taking

Assessment

Assessments will be based primarily on observations of daily activities and events. Practitioners will note the learning which the child demonstrates spontaneously, independently, and consistently in a range of contexts.

Through observations, we make regular assessments of children's learning and monitor the progress of each individual child; planning is adjusted accordingly to ensure every child is both challenged and supported to achieve their full potential.

For each child in our EYFS setting we create a learning journal. This contains observations of day-to-day interactions, knowledge of the child, information from parents/carers and information from relevant adults. We use 'Tapestry' (a secure online learning journal). This platform allows us to regularly share the children's learning and helps us to work in close partnership with parents. This strengthens the outcomes for the children. The learning journals (along with examples of learning in maths folders and literacy books) are used to assess the child's development. This information is used to complete an EYFS profile for

each child by the end of June in their Reception year. An EYFS profile summarises and describes a child's attainment at the end of the Early Years. It details the child's attainment in relation to the 17 Early Learning Goal (ELG) descriptors, and also indicates whether their development (within each ELG) is 'emerging', or 'expected'. 'Expected' is an indicator of good progress. Teachers will also report on 'The Characteristics of Effective Learning'. We use EYFS profile data to:

- Inform parents about their child's development against the ELGs
- Support a smooth transition into Key stage 1
- Provide the Local Authority with statutory data

Parent Partnerships

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators, and we value the contribution they make. The role that parents play in educating their child is recognised and encouraged by:

- Inviting parents to open days
- We hold a 'New Parents' Welcome' meeting where parents are given a presentation on the Early Years Foundation Stage at our school. They have the opportunity to talk to other parents, to the Headteacher, to Governors and to chat informally to members of the EYFS team
- An information pack (covering educational and administration issues e.g. school meals) is given to all new parents
- We invite parents/children to visit Nursery and Reception for a first meeting this both supports transition and builds relationships
- Talking to parents about their child during home/school visits
- Providing Reception parents with an 'All About Me' booklet to share information regarding their child's interests and achievements to date.
- Parent workshops are held throughout the year
- Tapestry online learning journals (to share their child's learning)
- Regular updates are shared via both the memo section on Tapestry and also the school website
- Regular 'Stay and Play' sessions
- Home/school phonics folders to support learning
- Home/school reading record books to support reading
- Parents' evenings / open evenings
- Providing a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year
- Encouraging parents to contribute their skills and expertise to the curriculum.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs. We establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

- Members of staff from Burford School make visits to feeder settings
- Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the practitioners
- Children from our school Nursery will have regular informal visits into the Reception classroom in the summer term
- Children requiring extra support will have additional visits regardless of their setting.

A smooth induction to Year 1 is ensured by:

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff to discuss each child's development (against the Early Learning Goals). This discussion supports a smooth transition to Year 1, by helping the Year 1 teacher plan an effective, responsive, and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

- Sessions when Year 1 staff can come down to meet and work with the children
- Class swaps that enable the Reception children to become familiar with KS1 setting

Intimate Care

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff, when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with the parents to provide the right support to an individual child.

If a child has received intimate care over the course of the day, parents will be informed of this care at the end of the day. Intimate care is given to children who need it, in line with school policy.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Inclusion

Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. This commitment starts from the very beginning of each child's school career. Our aim is to ensure that every child is fully included both academically and socially; every individual child makes accelerated progress and meets their full potential. We are committed to equal opportunities for all children in all our practice. 'Quality First' teaching is at the core of this aim. All planning is therefore fully differentiated so that all children can fully access the curriculum and make progress at their level. The rich learning environment and range of resources available to support the teaching and learning are also specifically tailored to stimulate and engage all children.