

Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS) Policy



Barnes Infant Academy

Approved by: Mrs E Rolfe
Last reviewed on: April 2026
Next review due by: October 2026

Statement of Intent

This policy has been developed in conjunction with relevant Department for Education (DfE) guidance and legislation to ensure that every child at Barnes Infant Academy has a happy, safe and positive start to their school life, enabling them to build the foundations for a lifelong love of learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a crucial phase of education which supports children's long-term wellbeing, development and future learning. At Barnes Infant Academy, our EYFS curriculum is designed to be creative, ambitious, memorable and meaningful within a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment. We aim for children to become active participants in their own learning through rich experiences, purposeful play and high-quality interactions.

We place a strong emphasis on communication and language development, alongside children's personal, social and emotional development. We recognise that children thrive when they are provided with engaging opportunities that develop their understanding of the world and equip them with the skills needed to become confident, resilient and successful learners.

We value and build upon children's previous learning and experiences and strive to provide a curriculum that is motivating, inclusive and responsive to the needs and interests of all children.

Staff follow the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024)*. *Development Matters (2023)* and *Birth to 5 Matters (2021)* are used to support high-quality teaching, learning and provision.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (2015)
- Equality Act 2010

Aims

We seek to provide:

- A broad and balanced curriculum that gives children the knowledge, skills and experiences needed for good progress through school and later life.
- High-quality and consistent teaching and learning so that every child can reach their full potential.
- A strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring every child is included, valued and supported.

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life.
- Enable children to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a safe and supportive environment.
- Support children in building positive relationships through cooperation, communication and sharing.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to meet children's individual needs and help them achieve their full potential.

We recognise the four guiding principles of the EYFS:

- 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 where their experiences respond to their individual needs and where strong partnerships between practitioners and parents are established.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development.

Prime Areas

The three prime areas are fundamental to children's learning and development:

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

Specific Areas

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

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

Our curriculum reflects the community in which it is situated, recognising our geographical location and celebrating the diverse cultures represented within our school community.

Children's learning is underpinned through the development of key skills, knowledge, concepts and values. We provide engaging enhancements and meaningful opportunities for children to practise, apply and consolidate their learning.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

At Barnes Infant Academy, we support and develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning through a play-based and interest-led approach. Staff carefully support children across all areas of learning through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning focus on how children learn rather than what they learn. Our environments, interactions and experiences are designed to respond to children's interests, fascinations and individual learning styles.

We support this through:

- Open-ended and natural resources
- Sustained periods of uninterrupted play
- Challenging and engaging learning opportunities
- Skilled practitioners who scaffold, extend and develop children's thinking

The three Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

Playing and Exploring – Engagement

Children investigate and experience things and “have a go”. They respond to first-hand experiences and represent their ideas through imaginative play. Children adapt, connect and apply their learning and become willing to take risks, understanding that mistakes are part of the learning process.

Active Learning – Motivation

Children develop their own interests, maintain concentration and persevere when challenges arise. They take pride in their achievements and become motivated learners.

Creating and Thinking Critically – Thinking

Children develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for solving problems and completing tasks.

Implementation

Staff plan activities and experiences that enable children to develop and learn effectively. Practitioners take account of the individual needs, interests and stages of development of each child and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable learning experiences.

Where a child may have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), staff will consider whether specialist support is required and will work alongside outside agencies where appropriate.

Learning and development are implemented through both adult-led and child-initiated experiences. Practitioners respond to children's emerging needs and interests and guide their development through warm, positive and responsive interactions.

We use carefully planned overarching themes and experiences to support progression in learning while remaining responsive to children's interests and fascinations. Children's interests are used to promote deeper thinking, sustained engagement and high-quality learning opportunities.

Child-initiated learning is highly valued and encouraged. Timetables provide opportunities for sustained periods of uninterrupted play and exploration. Adult-led learning introduces new concepts, knowledge and skills while providing opportunities for children to practise and embed learning through continuous provision.

Practitioners make effective use of "in the moment" interactions to extend children's learning and thinking.

Outdoor Learning

Children have regular access to high-quality outdoor provision that supports all areas of learning and development. Outdoor learning in our Nursery and Reception gardens (Nature School) provides valuable opportunities for children to:

- Explore the natural world
- Develop language and communication skills
- Build confidence and independence
- Develop gross motor skills
- Take managed risks safely
- Work collaboratively with others

We also make use of the local environment, including regular visits to the local park, to enrich children's experiences and understanding of the world around them.

Key Person

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that learning and care are tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person supports positive relationships with parents and carers and helps children to feel safe, secure and confident within the setting.

Where appropriate, the key person will also work with outside agencies and specialist services to support children's development.

In Nursery and Reception, children participate in daily key group (family group) sessions focused primarily on communication and language and personal, social and emotional development.

Early Reading and Phonics

In Nursery, children explore Phase 1 of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised through regular focused sessions and targeted support within provision. This supports the development of listening, attention and oral blending and segmenting skills.

In Reception, reading is taught through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, a systematic synthetic phonics programme. Children participate in daily phonics sessions and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and Phase 4 words with adjacent consonants with increasing fluency and accuracy.

Children also participate in regular reading practice sessions each week to develop fluency, prosody and comprehension.

Further information can be found in the school's Reading Policy.

Mathematics

Across EYFS, practitioners develop positive attitudes towards mathematics and encourage children to explore and experiment with number confidently.

In Nursery, children engage with stories, rhymes, songs and practical experiences that develop early mathematical understanding. Children begin to develop their understanding of numbers and early mathematical concepts through meaningful play and interaction.

In Reception, teachers use the NCETM Mastering Number Programme to develop secure foundations in number sense. Through adult-led teaching, mathematical routines and opportunities for learning through play, children develop their understanding of early mathematical concepts.

Spatial reasoning is also prioritised within the curriculum. Children are provided with opportunities to explore shape, space, measure and position through both adult-led activities and continuous provision, including construction, block play, puzzles and creative activities.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process within EYFS. Assessment is primarily formative and is based on professional observations, interactions and knowledge of the child.

Practitioners observe children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps in learning. These observations are used to inform future planning and ensure that learning experiences are appropriately challenging and responsive.

Information shared by parents and carers is also valued and contributes to the assessment process.

Children are supported and challenged appropriately from their individual starting points. Those working beyond age-related expectations are provided with opportunities for greater depth, while children requiring additional support receive targeted intervention and tailored provision.

Children are expected to make good progress academically, socially, emotionally and physically. They will develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to support a successful transition into Key Stage 1.

Children's progress and attainment are monitored through:

- Ongoing observations and assessment
- Pupil progress meetings
- Learning walks and observations
- Scrutiny of planning and learning
- Professional discussions with staff and children

At the end of Reception, staff complete the EYFS Profile for each child. Children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals and are identified as:

- Expected
- Emerging

The EYFS Profile is based on ongoing assessment and discussions with parents and carers. Outcomes are shared with parents and carers and support transition into Year 1.

Transition

We recognise the importance of effective transitions in supporting children's wellbeing and future success.

To support transition into Nursery and Reception, we provide:

- Induction meetings
- Visits to the setting
- Opportunities for parents and carers to meet staff
- Transition activities for children

To support transition into Year 1, EYFS staff work closely with Key Stage 1 colleagues through professional discussions, shared information, visits and curriculum planning to ensure continuity in learning and development.

Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and that children learn and develop best when strong partnerships exist between home and school.

We develop positive relationships with parents and carers through:

- Induction meetings and visits prior to children starting Nursery or Reception
- Regular parent consultations
- Class Dojo communication
- An open-door approach
- Workshops, stay-and-play sessions and family events
- Inviting parents and carers to support educational visits and trips

Parents and carers are kept informed about their child's progress and development throughout the year.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

At Barnes Infant Academy, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children, regardless of SEND, gender, ethnicity, religion, home language or background.

We believe every child should feel safe, valued and included. Practitioners adapt provision appropriately to ensure all children can access the curriculum and achieve their potential.

Health and Safety

The safety and wellbeing of children is of paramount importance.

- First-aid equipment is located in the First Aid Room and Nursery provision.
- The school's Medicines Policy outlines procedures for administering medicines.
- Accidents, injuries and first-aid treatment are recorded and reported to parents and carers on the same day.
- The school has a Fire Evacuation Plan in place and children participate in regular fire drills.
- Food and drink provided are healthy, balanced and nutritious.
- Information regarding dietary requirements, allergies and medical needs is recorded and shared with relevant staff.

All staff are responsible for maintaining a safe and secure learning environment.

Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children.

All staff working within EYFS are subject to appropriate safeguarding and suitability checks, including enhanced DBS checks. Staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role and are expected to understand and follow the school's safeguarding procedures at all times.

Any safeguarding or welfare concerns are managed in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Mrs Bell.

The Deputy DSLs are:

- Mr Durham
- Mrs Rushworth
- Mrs Houghton

The DSL and Deputy DSLs undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and liaise with external agencies where necessary.

The school also has clear procedures relating to:

- Online safety
- Whistleblowing
- Intimate care
- Staff conduct
- Mobile phone and camera use

Further information can be found in the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the EYFS Lead, Mrs Rolfe.

The governing board is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring its implementation.