John Burns Primary School

Early Years Policy

June 2026

Agreed by Governing Body	Summer 2026
Signatory (Chair of Curriculum Committee)	
Date of next Review	**Summer 2027**

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the area of education upon which young children build the rest of their lives. It is a single framework for care, learning and development. All learners should be given the opportunity to experience the best possible start to their education to develop solid foundations which will ensure that they flourish throughout their school years and on into adulthood.

The 'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework' (2025) refers to children from birth to the end of the reception year. It sets out a series of Early Learning Goals for children to work towards by the time they reach the end of EYFS at the age of 5+.

PURPOSE

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these principles and details the ways in which we at John Burns Primary School recognise and provide for the needs of our youngest children. This period is a most critical stage of change and developing in their thinking and ability to make sense of the world around them. It is also a time when attitudes and behaviour are established for education and the rest of life.

The experiences offered to all children in their Nursery and Reception year at John Burns Primary School help them to develop spiritually, emotionally, socially, morally, intellectually, physically and creatively, as set out in the guidelines in the National Foundation Stage Curriculum.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At John Burns Primary we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, spiritually, physically, creativity and intellectually to their full potential.

We aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad and balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in support of their children.
- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

- Monitor the children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary.

CURRICULUM

The EYFS Principles

The EYFS is based on four principles: a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments, and learning and development.

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent and unique learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured with support. This is focused around development, inclusion, safety, health and well-being.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and a key person or teacher. The commitments are focused around respect, partnership with parents, supporting learning and the role of the practitioner.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The learning environment is planned for both indoors and outdoors to encourage a positive attitude to learning that is not exclusive to a classroom setting and provides different approaches and tasks to be adapted to different learning styles. This is focused around observation, assessment and planning, support for every child, the learning environment and wider contexts – transitions, continuity and multiagency working.

Learning and Development

We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected. Our Early Years curriculum is based on Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework' (2025). We follow the strands set by this curriculum and concentrate on the three characteristics of effective learning and the seven areas of learning.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:
Playing and Exploring *– children investigate and experience things, 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.*

The Seven Areas of Learning

There are seven areas of learning that shape education provision in the Early Years at John Burns Primary School. All areas of learning are important and inter-connected and provision takes into account the different starting points of the child.

The three prime areas are Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, and Physical Development. Prime areas are fundamental, work together and move through to support development in all other areas.

There are four specific areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design. Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge.

Communication and Language

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence in skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Physical Development

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food. This promotes a positive feeling of well-being.

Literacy

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest. The school uses the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme to support our teaching of phonics.

Mathematics

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, numerical patterns and measures.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people,

places, technology and the environment. Foundations are developed for the later teaching of Science, Design and Technology, History, Geography and Computing.

Expressive Art and Design

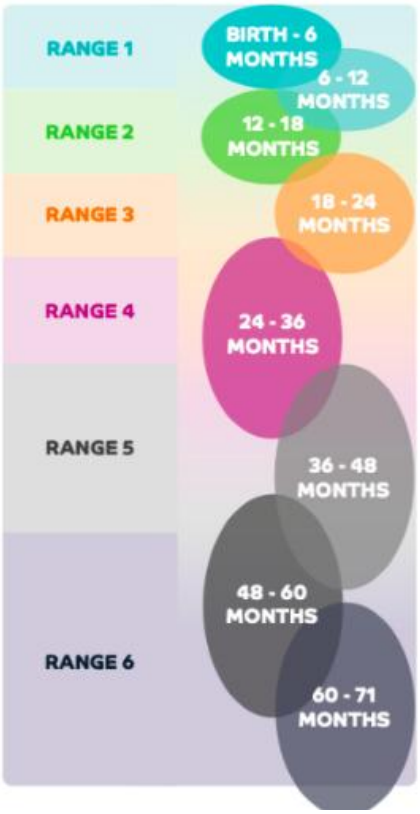
Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN, RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning.
These observations can lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the child's Learning Journal. Each child has a Learning Journal for observational assessments.

During the first half term in Reception, the class teacher assesses the ability of each child using Development Matters Statements to form a Baseline Assessment. This assessment allows us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

Children in Nursery will be assessed using the Development Matters Statements. This is completed upon entry and during the second half of each term (autumn 2, spring 2 and summer 2).



Pre - Nursery children working within Range 4 are working within age related expections.

Nursery children working within Range 5 are working within age related expectations.

Reception children working within Range 6 are working within age related expectations.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the national employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and tosummarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessment of children's learning, and this information is used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence, and through planned assessment experiences. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

The teacher keeps progress records and records examples of each child's work. These records contain a wider range of evidence that parents have the opportunity to look at, as and when they wish to do so, including on termly parent open mornings.

We record each child's level of development to be working below, within or secure in each of the Development Matters age-bands. The profile ensures that each child leaves the Foundation Stage with their strengths acknowledged and next steps for learning identified.

In the summer term the Reception children are assessed and profile data is sent to the LA. An end of year report summarising the achievements during the Early Years is then sent to parents. The teacher must note whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ("emerging").

The profile data is discussed with the Year 1 teacher so that he/she can continue to support the children to achieve the early learning goals before beginning to assess against the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

TRANSITION

We believe that we should be prepared for the children entering each stage of their learning.

In the EYFS we acknowledge the following transitional stages:
- Home to Nursery
- Nursery to Reception
- Reception to Year 1

We believe that the best Early Years practice sees learning as a continuum and that our role is to smooth the way between the child's home experience, EYFS curriculum and stages, ensuring that the curriculum we provide in Key Stage One reflects our understanding of the children as learners. We aim to fit the curriculum to the child and not try to fit the child to the curriculum.

We are committed to the EYFS and we believe it is essential that children who enter both Nursery and Reception receive their full entitlement to the EYFS. The Foundation Stage provides the firm foundations upon which all subsequent learning builds. Transition is

managed in a thoughtful and planned way, taking account of the needs of the young learner.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Approved by Governors on_____

Signed _____

Review date: Summer 2026