May 2026-2027

Bishop Monkton Church of England School

Early Years Policy

Aims

Our aim is to provide a secure, safe, happy and exciting environment in which the children can develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. During the Early Years we are laying the foundations for future learning, encouraging the children to become independent and develop a positive approach to school life. Play is at the heart of learning in EYFS and allows children to experiment, explore and test mathematical and scientific thinking as well as encouraging them to communicate and express their feelings. It also develops their problem solving and physical skills.

Transition into Reception

To ensure a smooth transition into Reception we do the following:

- The class teacher and teaching assistant work closely with pre-school settings and our school nursery in the summer term. Information is shared with staff and the children are observed in a familiar environment in order to build up a profile of a child prior to them starting school.
- Parents are invited to attend an information evening with the class teacher and support staff in order to familiarise themselves with the expectations around starting school.
- Parents are asked to complete with their child “My starting school” booklet which helps to provide important background information for the class teacher.
- Parents complete admission forms which collate all the necessary information about their child.
- Children are invited to attend an afternoon session, followed by a morning session with lunch, to become familiar with the class teacher, peers and the school environment.
- Children are allocated a Year 6 buddy in order to help them to settle and to support them at lunch and playtimes.

Classroom organisation

Our carefully constructed learning environment promotes creative, purposeful and meaningful experiences in order to support children to progress as learners. We offer an exciting, exploratory and stimulating environment that promotes school readiness. This ensures our children feel safe and secure. High expectations of the children and their behaviour, encourage them to excel and become respectful and responsible learners in our setting. Learning opportunities are planned to be both stimulating and challenging and are heavily influenced by the children’s interests and learning journeys which they chose to embark upon.

Planning the curriculum

Within the Foundation Stage planning is taken from Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profiles.

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape the educational programme. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial to igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are referred to as the prime areas and are as follows:

Prime Areas:

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

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

Specific Areas:

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

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The three characteristics of effective learning describe the behaviours children use in order to learn.

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and build the resilience to 'have a go'
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achieving
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Phonics and early reading

The Curriculum is built around reading and encourages a love of reading from the start. Phonics is taught in Early Years and KS1 through Little Wandle Phonics programme which is a systematic and highly effective approach used for the teaching of early reading and writing. Parents meetings will include information on the phonics programme. Phonics support for parents can be found on the class pages.

Assessment

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is continuous. They are made through observations, photographic evidence, and annotated work and from conversations with the child and with staff who work with that child.

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a statutory assessment for children starting Reception in state-funded schools. It is designed to measure early literacy, communication, language, and mathematics skills at the beginning of school. This assessment is carried out within the first 6 weeks of school.

At the end of the Reception year, children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals. If a child is expected in all of the Prime Areas as well as the Specific Areas of Literacy and Mathematics, a child has reached a Good Level of Development.

Parents as Partners

Parents attend a welcome meeting in the summer term prior to their child starting school. This is an opportunity to meet staff and become familiar with the school environment and the expectations around starting school.
There will also be regular opportunities to discuss your child's progress and any concerns that they may have through parents' evenings and informal discussions.

Signed Headteacher	Sally A Cowling
Signed Chair of Governors	Ashlea Costelloe
Date	18th May 2026
Review date	May 2027