Bishop Monkton Church of England School

Early Years Policy

February 2026

Act justly, love kindness and walk humbly with God. *Micah 6:8*

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.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year and is based upon our principles:

• **Unique child** – We recognise that every child is unique and is continually learning, resilient and capable, confident and self-assured;

• **Positive Relationships** – We recognise that children learn to be strong, secure and independent through positive relationships;

• **Enabling Environments** – 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, parents and carers;

• **Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn in different ways. The EYFS Statutory Framework (updated November 2024) covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with additional needs.

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 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 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 to help them to settle and to support them at lunch and playtimes

Classroom Organisation

Our learning environment is carefully organised to provide high-quality, inclusive and purposeful experiences that support all children to make strong progress across the EYFS. We offer a rich, engaging and well-resourced environment that encourages exploration, curiosity and independent learning, while promoting school readiness. The environment is designed to ensure children feel safe, secure and confident, enabling them to take risks in their learning. Consistently high expectations of behaviour and learning support children in developing positive attitudes, self-regulation and respect for others, helping them to become responsible and reflective learners. Learning opportunities are planned to be motivating, appropriately challenging and responsive to children's interests, needs and stages of development, with children actively involved in shaping their own learning journeys.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

• Personal, Social and Emotional Development

• Communication, Language and Literacy

• Physical Development

• Literacy

• Mathematics

• Knowledge of the World

• Expressive Arts and Design

In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. Our curriculum is planned across the 7 Areas of Learning and promote the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning 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; and

• Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. These characteristics underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Curriculum and Reading

Reading is a central component of our curriculum and is prioritised to develop children's early language, communication skills and a lifelong love of reading. From the outset, children are immersed in a language-rich environment that promotes vocabulary development, storytelling and enjoyment of books. Phonics is taught throughout the Early Years and Key Stage 1 using the Little Wandle Letters, which provides a systematic, consistent and evidence-based approach to the teaching of early reading and writing. Parents are kept well informed about the phonics programme through meetings and workshops, supporting strong home–school partnerships. Further information and resources to support phonics and early reading at home are available on the class pages of the school website.

Welfare and Safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2024), KCSiE 2024 and other school safeguarding and child protection related policies, including online safety.

We ensure:

• Children enjoy daily fruit and are encouraged to drink water throughout the day.

• Free school lunch is available to children.

• Risk assessments are carried out and when children go on a school visit in line with our Educational Visits Policy.

• Transition is carefully planned for the children from Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year 1.

Planning and Assessing Children's Attainment and Progress

We use Development Matters to support planning and ensure that children are secure in the development areas of Birth to Three, so that their learning can progress in nursery (3 and 4-year olds) and then in Reception. 'Development Matters offers a top-level view of how children develop and learn for all early years practitioners'. This guidance supports us to ensure that we meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation stage statutory framework.

Capturing and Sharing Children's Learning Experiences

Seesaw is the online learning platform which we use to capture the children's learning experiences through photographs and videos. It allows learning that takes place at school to be shared with parents. This shows a broader picture of a child's development. It allows parents/ carers to share developments and achievements at home/ outside school.

Health

We promote the good health, including oral health, of children attending the setting. We have a procedure, shared with parents and/or carers for responding to children who are ill or infectious, we take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action if children are ill.

We have implemented a policy, and procedures, for administering medicines. We have systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medicine, and for keeping this information up to date. Prescription medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, nurse, dentist or pharmacist. Medicines (prescribed) will only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent/carer. We keep a written record each time medicine is administered to a child.

Food and Drink

We ensure that meals, snacks and drinks will be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Before a child starts school, we obtain information about any special dietary requirements and food allergies that the child may have, and any special health requirements. We will record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs. We ensure suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food and expect staff to complete food hygiene training. Fresh drinking water is available and accessible to children at all times.

Food safety advice for children aged 5 and under.

The EYFS Statutory Framework (November 2024) requires providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. Children should always be supervised closely during snack and mealtimes, and food should be cut into small, manageable pieces and staff should be familiar with paediatric first aid advice about choking in children.

Reviewed February 2026

To be reviewed: February 2027