

**EYFS at St Botolph’s CofE Primary School**

**Our Philosophy**

At St Botolph’s Primary School, we believe that the Foundation Stage plays a crucial role in securing the foundations to prepare children not only for later schooling, but is also early preparation for life.

We aim to create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents, carers and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

All of the staff in our Foundation unit deliver an EYFS curriculum through immersion in high quality teaching alongside an enriched environment.

Our philosophy is to nurture every child’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, developing both skills and confidence so that they can ‘Strive to be the best they can be.’

**The Intent**

The intent for our children is to enter the next stage of their education ready to tackle new challenges with confidence and a positive mindset.

As part of our practice we aim to:

* Engage our pupils in a stimulating environment led by the children yet carefully organised and managed by adults.
* Provide an ambitious and exciting curriculum that is responsive to individual starting points and needs so that irrelevant of their background or start point, all of the children can achieve and succeed.
* Empower our children to take the lead in their own learning, encouraging confidence to explore new ideas, think about problems, take risks, make links and seek challenge.
* Develop high levels of engagement, curiosity, collaboration and cooperation so that the children become highly adept at managing their own behaviour in the classroom and in social situations.
* Encourage the children to express themselves with confidence in a meaningful way.
* Through our commitment to our Christian values, our children learn to respect the opinions and values of themselves and others.

It is our intention that all of our children will have success today and be prepared for tomorrow.

**Implementation**

Our approach is influenced by the work of educationalists, researchers, psychologists and practitioners who have guided our knowledge of how young children learn and how adults can support their learning.

*“Knowledgeable practitioners appreciate that adult-led learning offers a child something different from, but complementary to, child led learning and it is one without the other that leads to an impoverished educational experience.” Fisher, 2016.*

At St Botolph’s, provision is underpinned by a complementary relationship between adult led, adult-initiated and child led learning.

We are ambitious in our approach using a continuous cycle of observation and assessment, planning/teaching, alongside structured and systematic lessons and guided group work.

**The structure of the day**

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| **Morning** | **Organisation** |
| 8.40am  Doors Open – Adults welcome children at the door | Yoga/Early morning work  Welcome and register |
| **9am** | **Carpet Input**  **(Maths Focus/Writing Focus/Topic Focus)** |
| **9.25am** | **Own Learning**  *Balance of focused, child initiated and independent learning within the indoor and outdoor environment. May also include adult led small group activities* |
| **10.20am** | **RWI** |
| **10.45am** | **Carpet Input followed by Own Learning**  *Balance of focused, child initiated and independent learning within the indoor and outdoor environment. May also include adult led small group activities* |
| **11.45am** | **Maths Fluency and tidy up time** |
| **12.05pm** | **Lunch** |
| **Afternoon** | **Organisation** |
| **1.05pm** | Welcome and register |
| **1.15pm** | **Carpet Input**  **(Maths Focus/Writing Focus/Topic Focus)** |
| **1.30pm** | **Own Learning**  *Balance of focused, child initiated and independent learning within the indoor and outdoor environment. May also include adult led small group activities* |
| **2.30pm** | **Story time** |
| **3pm** | **HOME TIME** |

**Carpet Inputs**

Three times a day as a whole class covering the specific areas of literacy, maths and phonics objectives. Once children have been taught RWI Set 1 sounds, children are split into smaller, ability-based groups,

**Adult led focused groups**

Short focused groups are planned for writing, reading and maths and immediately follow a shared input. These sessions are planned with care, meeting the needs of all children, using prior knowledge of the child’s learning experiences and guidance from the EYFS document ‘Development Matters’, 2020.

**Continuous Provision**

“To continue the provision for learning in the absence of an adult.” Alistair Bryce-Clegg, 2013

Indoors and outdoors resources are organised to develop children’s skills in personal interaction and exploration and are linked to current assessment data. Resources are carefully selected to meet the development needs of the children in order to enhance potential for new learning and consolidate prior learning. Resources are dressed/displayed to reflect children’s interests – discover, experiment and explore are key themes.

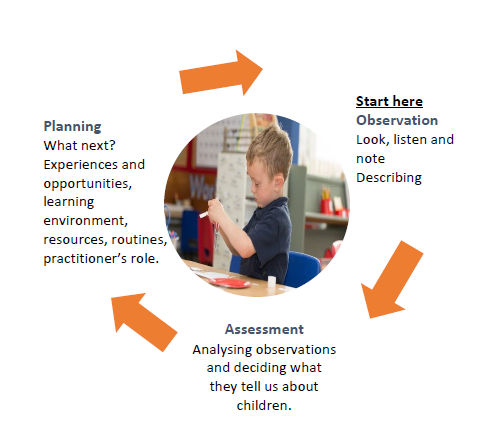
Continuous provision transcends all areas of learning and provides children with the opportunity to demonstrate the three characteristics of effective learning. Children are given the freedom to make independent choices and are encouraged to be active learners and take control of their own learning.

**Assessment**

To help monitor the children’s progress each child has their own online Learning Journey. This includes observations, photographs or videos to show where the children are working within the curriculum. Parents can access these at any time and we actively encourage parents to add their own observations to share with school.

The adults in Foundation use these observations and their knowledge of the children in their class to monitor the children’s stage of development for each of the 7 areas of learning. These take place termly and informs planning of subsequent teaching and learning. The Foundation staff share this information with Senior Leaders and the SENDco.

A continuous cycle of observation, assessment and planning is embedded throughout our EYFS provision.



*Observation*

Throughout ‘continuous provision’, observation forms a fundamental aspect of the pedagogy of EYFS at St Botolph’s CofE Primary School.

“Young children demonstrate language, mathematics, science, creativity, physicality – sometimes all within one activity – and the task of the practitioner is to make sense of what is seen, to recognise any significant steps in learning that may have taken place and to identify where help and support are needed to make further progress” Jan Dubiel, 2014

Observation and responding to children’s thinking inform our planning of experiences and opportunities, how we create our environment for thinking, the strategies the adults use to extend learning (modelling, scaffolding, questioning, discussion, shared sustained thinking) and how we capitalise knowledge of children’s interests to ensure high levels of engagement.

All adults record ‘Wow!’ moments – when a child does or says something that demonstrates progress or skill in a particular area.

*The Leuven scales*

Alongside the use of observation as an assessment tool we also rely upon the pioneering work of Professor Ferre Laevers (1980s) to understand how focused and comfortable the children are in our setting.

The scales of well-being and involvement act as a measure of deep learning and of the effectiveness of the learning environment. This has an empowering impact on our planning and can help to develop the huge potential of the children.

The 5-point scale measures: Well Being and Involvement.

Well Being refers to feeling at ease, being spontaneous and free of emotional tensions and is crucial to good mental health. It is linked to self-confidence, a good degree of self-esteem and resilience.

Involvement refers to being intensely engaged in activities and is a necessary condition for deep level learning and development.

**The role of the adult**

Research shows that progress will be significantly enhanced by the effective support and role models of adults within a high-quality learning environment.

At St Botolph’s, interactions between children and adults during continuous provision will look like this:

• Tuning in to what is happening or a child’s thinking.

• Showing genuine interest.

• Respecting children’s own decisions and choices.

• Inviting children to elaborate.

• Recapping on what has happened so far.

• Offering personal experience.

• Clarifying ideas.

• Reminding.

• Using specific praise e.g. that is a good idea because…

• Offering an alternative viewpoint.

• Speculating/ using ‘I wonder if…’

The definition of teaching in the Early Years as stated by OFSTED (2015);

Teaching should not be taken to imply a ‘top down’ or formal way of working. It is a broad term which covers the many ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities:

communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges.

It takes account of the equipment they provide and the attention to the physical environment as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do as well as take account of their interests and dispositions to learning (characteristics of effective learning), and use this information to plan children’s next steps in learning and monitor their progress.

“A key role of the early childhood educator is to sustain children’s thinking and follow the momentum of their learning.” Julie Fisher, 2016.

**The role of the environment**

The importance of each adult to support progress is crucial, however, we equally understand that in times when a child is on their own independent learning journey, the environment plays a significant role in development.

“When it comes to what we have and where we have it, then nothing should be left to chance” Alistair Bryce-Clegg, 2015.

At St Botolph’s each area of the classroom is informed by assessment. As the needs of the children change, as they grow and develop, so does their learning space.

Using resources that are open ended encourages creativity, imagination and high order thinking skills. For example, the workshop may contain ribbon, lace, pinecones or lolly sticks. These resources can become anything and have unlimited potential.

Our timetable allows for long uninterrupted periods of continuous provision that allow the children time to reach a deep level of involvement as they engage, play, investigate and talk.

**Early Adopter Curriculum 2020**

At St Botolph’s we follow the EYFS Early Adopter framework (2020). Within this framework there are four guiding principles which shape are practice.

These are:

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.

2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

4. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

**EYFS learning and development requirements**

Our curriculum encompasses seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships, and thriving.

These are called the prime areas:

• communication and language

• physical development

• personal, social, and emotional development.

Four areas help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas.

These are called the specific areas:

• literacy

• mathematics understanding the world

• expressive arts and design

Throughout their time in the Reception Year our children partake in an ambitious curriculum which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards the end of reception goals. These goals are defined as Early Learning Goals (ELGs) The descriptors for these can be found in the appendix.

As previously outlined our curriculum incorporates learning through play, learning by adults modelling, by observing each other and through guided learning and direct teaching. It is also important to highlight that our plans are flexible to allow us to respond quickly to children’s new interests and/or needs.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum at St Botolph’s are three Characteristics of Effective Learning.

• 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

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child’s development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children’s play is essential.

‘What children learn is important, but how children learn is even more important if they are to become learners in today’s society.’ Helen Moylett

How Children Learn, Nancy Stewart (2011)

**Parent Engagement**

Parents are the first and most important influence on their child’s development and future outcomes.

Children have two main educators in their lives – their parents and their teachers. Therefore, the school and the parents all have crucial roles to play. The impact on a child’s education is greater if parents and schools work in partnership.

At St Botolph’s, parents are invited to be involved in every step of a child’s journey in education. Beginning with a pre- starting school meeting, followed up with nursery visits and the invitation for their child to attend several ‘transition’ sessions before the Autumn term commences.

We use an online learning journal, ‘Tapestry’ to record, track and celebrate progress made by each child.

Tapestry enhances this special time in a child’s life and captures children's experiences as well as monitors development and learning. Text, images and videos can be uploaded by parents to share learning and experiences from home via PC, tablet or our mobile app – anywhere there's an online connection. Every entry helps to create a complete story of a child's time at school.

Throughout the year families are invited to many whole school events.

We pride ourselves on building positive relationships with the families of St Botolph’s. We understand that when parents relinquish part of the care and teaching of their child to the staff in our setting it is a big step.

We create an environment that is conducive to interactions where all feelings can be considered.

A warm welcome each day often leads to a deeper knowledge and understanding of each child and their family.

‘it is knowing the child and family that opens up endless possibilities for interactions that deepen the emotional bonds between a practitioner and a child, and lead, in turn, to educational opportunities to support and extend learning.’ (Fisher, 2016)

**Impact**

We strive to ensure that our children’s progress across the EYFS curriculum is good from their varied starting points. We also strive for children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception and to be at least in line with National Expectations.

The impact of our curriculum will also be measured by how effectively it helps our pupils develop into well rounded individuals who embody our values and carry with them the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them lifelong learners and valuable future citizens. We endeavour for pupils to be Key Stage One ready and have our school values embedded by the time they leave reception, preparing them for their future.