

**Brindle St James' Church
of England
Primary School**



Early Years Policy

January 2026

School vision

A school family rooted in God's love

Ephesians 3:17: and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.

Curriculum intent

We aim to grow and nurture our children with these 5 values:

- **Generosity** – To share their gifts and faith to make a difference upon the school, community and beyond.
- **Independence** – To develop resilience, confidence and wellbeing skills to deal with life's challenges.
- **Gratitude** – To appreciate the objects, experiences and people they have around them.
- **Friendship** – To work together offering peer support and have respect for individuals and all communities.
- **Love** – To have a passion to become the people God wants us to be - academically, personally and spiritually.

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1. The purpose of the Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Our Intent and Aims

The Early Years policy reflects the value and importance of early years' education. Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support to fulfil their potential. It provides a framework for staff, which gives guidance on practice, and outlines procedures for planning teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. The policy contributes towards raising educational standards within the early years and ensures that the needs of the youngest children are met within the context of policies, planning, agreed teaching approaches and organisational structures. The Early Years curriculum is being developed in accordance with DfE Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The term Foundation Stage refers to children from birth to five years old. Therefore, in our setting the terms "early years" refer to the children in preschool and reception. The policy reflects the main aims of the school.

The early learning goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage. In the Foundation Stage we believe that children will acquire and develop the following:

1. skills
2. knowledge
3. understanding
4. independence
5. moral values
6. the ability to enjoy learning

2. Introduction

The Early Years Policy addresses all aspects of the needs of young children and ensures that we are addressing the four overarching and guiding principles outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. The EYFS children at Brindle St James' are part of class one which also includes Year 1 pupils. EYFS children have their own curriculum to follow but there will often be a class topic so that the class feels as one.

These four principles shape our practice in the care, development and learning of our youngest children in our school:

Unique Child

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

At Brindle St James', we meet the needs of our pupils through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on the children's learning needs; providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- teaching the children about Growth Mindset and how their brains can 'grow' monitoring the children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. We strive to build positive relationships with all the families we work with. Our aim is to form positive partnership with parents/ and or care givers as we value the contributions they make. At Brindle St James', we do this through:

- our induction process which is where we meet parents to discuss their child before they start nursery/reception, including a home visit;
- the reception children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school, during visits in the summer term;
- we invite all of the parents to the induction meeting in the summer term before their child starts. Plus an EYFS phonics meeting in October.
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- planning for and arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- use of Dojo which enables parents to contribute towards their child's learning journey;
- Come and See sessions which encourage parents to take part in their child's routine and see how their child learns within the early years setting.

Enabling Environments

The environment plays a key role the development of a child. Children's experiences should respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between school and parents/carers. At our school, we are extremely fortunate to have a well-developed outdoor environment and school field where learning is planned for and organised in order to meet the needs of our children. Our learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn safely and securely. There are opportunities for child initiated activities where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills etc. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended.

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. Practitioners teach children through challenging playful opportunities focusing on all areas of development (prime and specific). They foster the characteristics of effective learning (Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically) in all they do.

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning see section 7 'Early Years Curriculum.' These areas are delivered throughout topics and also the child's interests; they are linked closely together. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Preschool and reception children (EYFS) have an outdoor area used all year round in all weathers. We believe that being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together.

3. Key Aims and Principles of the Early Years Policy

The Foundation Stage Staff believe the aims of the EYFS framework principles underpin their practice and reflect a shared vision of how children develop and learn. It also underpins the activities and experiences which help children make progress, and the type of stimulating environment which promotes opportunities for learning.

4. Staffing

All staff involved in the education of young children need to be able to develop good relationships with the children in their care so that they can feel secure, respected and thus able both to make mistakes and cope with minor failures as well as building confidently on their successes.

Staff training needs are reviewed annually and incorporated into the next action plan for the Foundation Stage.

In 2024/2025 the following people work in class one;

Teaching Staff

Miss Corney Class 1 teacher

Mrs Austin Class teacher half a day each week

Teaching Assistants

Mrs Morley	Teaching Assistant (Mon, Tue, Wed (PM HLTA))
Mrs Williams	Teaching Assistant Wed (PM) Thurs and Fri

5. Early Years provision, organisation and the learning environment

Foundation Stage provision at Brindle St James' is organised as follows:

Preschool and reception children are part of class one. Class one also consists of children in year 1. The classroom consists of a main classroom, a quiet room, outdoor covered area and outside. In addition, class one makes frequent use of the hall, playground and field depending on their activity. Our maximum intake for Preschool is 6 and Reception is 10 children.

Staff in the Foundation Stage class have specialist training, knowledge and expertise with working with young children and they liaise with other school staff and professionals e.g. Educational Psychologists, school nurse etc to provide a multi-disciplinary team. In the past, EYFS has gained the Lancashire **Quality Mark for staff and pupils in EYFS** and this good practice can be seen in all year groups across school.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum is carefully planned and structured to meet individual needs. Staff organise a range of approaches based on first-hand experiences, which give children the chance to make decisions and choices, work individually or in groups and explore the learning environment.

6. Parental Involvement

At Brindle St James', we value the input and support of parents as partners and educators. We are very aware that without the support and understanding of parents, children will not reach their full potential. We therefore aim to provide many opportunities for parents to play an active role in their child's education through:

□ **Open Door Policy**

Parents are able to speak to both the class teacher and teaching assistants before and after school.

□ **Busy Books**

These books serve two purposes. The first is to inform all parents about the different activities and skills their child has been learning that week at school, to share celebrations of achievement and to notify parents of upcoming events. The second is to provide parents with a daily space to write any messages they need to pass on but cannot do in person, particularly for working parents, as they may not get to see the staff at school. □ **Come and See**

The purpose of this group is to invite Reception parents into school once each half term to spend some time with their child in their learning environment. The children are able to show parents (or other carers) around the classroom and demonstrate some of the skills they have been learning about in class. In addition, we provide a selection of activities for parents and their child to take part in, aiming to provide them with ideas to extend their child's learning at home. E.g. Reading focus.

□ Magic Moments

We recognise that learning does not only take part at school, but continues at home, therefore we encourage parents to write any achievements their child makes at home on a magic moment slip which then contributes to their learning journey.

□ Home Visits as part of Induction

Each child is visited in their home environment, thus giving staff an opportunity to see the child in a familiar space and having a valuable opportunity to speak to parents about their child's likes, dislikes and any concerns.

□ Phonic and Reading Meeting

At the start of each academic year, parents are invited to attend a meeting, which informs them of how phonics is taught at school and it gives ideas of what they can do to support their child at home.

□ Induction Meeting

All new Reception families are invited into school to meet the staff, receive a presentation from the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors and Class Teacher and have a look around their child's new classroom. This also includes an information booklet to help with any questions parents and children may have.

□ Open Day

Presents an opportunity for discussion with Head Teacher and Foundation Stage staff prior to seeking admission.

□ Up to Date Website

Each half term, information and web links about our topic are also provided for children to continue and share their learning at home.

□ Settling In

Parents are welcome to accompany their child into the classroom at the start of the day except for the summer term to aid a smooth transition into Year 1.

□ Parents Evening

Two provided each year as well as a full report at the end of the year and an interim report in the spring term.

7. Early Years Curriculum

Implementation

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

There are seven areas of learning and development which shape our educational programmes in our early years setting. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- communication and language;
- physical development;
- personal, social and emotional development.

Our EYFS children are also supported in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world;
- expressive arts and design.

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

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.

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; 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. Children will also be taught to make healthy choices in relation to food.

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. Our teaching of synthetic phonics is based on letters and sounds.

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, and measures.

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.

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, roleplay, and design and technology.

'It is the role of the setting to help children experience awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning.' Ofsted Early Years Inspection Handbook, May 2019.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the 'Characteristics of effective Learning' which help practitioners identify 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 trying even if they encounter difficulties, they enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

We recognise that children's learning is holistic and that children neither recognise nor benefit from being confined with subject boundaries. We aim to provide a coherent curriculum that provides a clear focus for learning and draws together relevant activities which contribute to the development of the whole child. Thus, children can use and extend what they know, can do and understand within a realistic context.

Children in the early years learn in a variety of ways; by watching others, talking, asking questions, listening, exploring and investigating. The EYFS recognises the importance of well-planned play (indoors and outdoors) in helping children to learn and develop. Well planned play is also a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge. We recognise the crucial role of Foundation Stage staff in planning real experiences to enable children to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.

The EYFS recognises the importance of laying a secure foundation for future learning. It is crucial to their future success that children's earliest experiences help to build a secure foundation for learning throughout their school years and beyond. Practitioners must be sensitive to the individual development of each child to ensure that the activities they undertake are suitable for the stage that they have reached. Children need to be stretched, but not pushed beyond their capabilities, so that they can continue to enjoy learning. The keys to achieving this are:

- Ongoing observational assessment to inform planning for each child's continuing development through play-based activities
- A flexible approach that responds quickly to children's learning and development needs

- Coherence of learning and development across different settings and related to their children's experience at home

The statutory early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. They provide the basis for planning throughout the EYFS, so laying secure foundations from birth for future learning. By the end of the EYFS, some children will have exceeded the goals. Other children, depending on their individual needs, will be working towards some or all of the goals, particularly some younger children and some children with learning difficulties and disabilities and some learning English as an additional language. Detailed guidance on the early learning goals is set out in the *EYFS Statutory Framework and Development Matters in the EYFS*.

The curriculum in the foundation stage, is planned and delivered as outlined in the appropriate scheme of work for the foundation stage, which is produced by Lancashire Early Years Team. (This scheme of work ensures access to the curriculum for children with SEN.) However, key to planning in the foundation stage, is planning from the children's interest. Therefore, children in the foundation stage may not always continue with a set topic, although progression in key skills will still be taught through these topics.

8. Planning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Impact

We believe that assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. At Brindle St James', ongoing assessment/formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Our Foundation stage team will observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, our team will respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress, and observations that parents and carers share.

Assessment will not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. Paperwork will be limited to that which is necessary to promote children's successful learning and development. Parents and/or carers will be kept up to date with their child's progress and development through regular discussions, access to their child's learning journey online, an end of year report, plus whole school parents' evenings. Our team will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

In Preschool and Reception, our children are assessed at Baseline and then in the summer term with an end of year assessment. Teacher assessment is inputted regularly for analysis. We use the Lancashire Early Years online tracker and our own bespoke assessment tool unique to our school.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile will reflect: ongoing observations; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development will be assessed against the early learning goals. Our team will indicate whether the children are meeting expected levels of development, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

We share the results of the Profile with parents and/or carers and explain to them when and how they can discuss the Profile with their child's teacher.

The Profile is completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with special educational needs and disabilities will be made as appropriate. SEND children are supported by TAs, SENDCO, and differentiated activities (Please refer to SEND Policy) regular monitoring and evaluation takes place within the Foundation Stage.

Topics covered by the Foundation Stage children through the areas of learning are planned to be:

- Interesting, enjoyable, challenging and relevant learning experiences, both inside and out, within the seven areas of learning.
- Learning experiences that take account of the life experiences of the children, the characteristics of the community and the concerns of children's families.
- Learning which uses a multi-sensory approach.
- Learning opportunities which enable children to make connections between areas of learning and transfer and consolidate their learning across the curriculum.

Learning Journeys contain photographs of the children and their work along with a commentary by staff. They are built up during the year to celebrate significant achievements. Work can also be seen in individual children's books and floor books.

Safeguarding, Welfare and Compliance

Brindle St James' CE Primary School is committed to meeting all safeguarding and welfare requirements outlined in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE) and Keeping Children Safe in Education. We ensure:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): The school DSL oversees safeguarding in EYFS. All staff receive annual safeguarding training and know how to report concerns.
- Health and Safety: Risk assessments are carried out for all areas of provision, including outdoor spaces and educational visits. Staff follow school health and safety policies.
- Staff Qualifications and Ratios:
 - At least one member of staff with a current Paediatric First Aid certificate is present at all times.
 - Staffing ratios comply with EYFS statutory requirements for preschool and reception.
- Behaviour Management: Positive behaviour strategies are used consistently. Physical intervention is only used in line with the school's behaviour policy.
- SEND and Inclusion: Provision complies with the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure all children, including those with SEND or EAL, can access the curriculum.
- Food and Drink: Healthy snacks and meals are provided in line with EYFS welfare requirements. Allergies and dietary needs are recorded and managed.
- Data Protection: All records are maintained securely in accordance with GDPR.

Educational visits and visitors

During the year, EYFS children will have the opportunity to study topics which will often link with the learning taking place in KS1. In order to enhance and enrich the curriculum, children will go on visits to the local area and visitors are invited into school to speak to the children. Below are some examples of visits and visitors:

- Church
- Autumn walk
- The zoo
- Visits from fire/police/ambulance workers,
- Local Vicar

9. Liaison with other agencies

Outside agencies we may contact include Speech Therapists, Social Services, Educational Welfare Officers and Educational Psychologists.

We maintain strong links with our school nurse who often arranges a time to speak to us about any concerns we may have. We would also contact her directly if we had any immediate concerns.

10. Staff Development

The identification of training needs for the Foundation Stage staff will take place through the appraisal process and/or staff development professional reviews.

The Foundation Stage manager will ensure that:

- Appropriate dissemination of training/materials/good practice take place regularly.
- A record of INSET activities is maintained.
- There is an assessment of the impact of INSET etc. on the quality of the teaching and learning.

11. Reviewing the Early Years Policy

The Early Years policy will be reviewed annually by the EYFS staff, head teacher and governor's curriculum sub-committee.