



Together, we learn, grow and flourish. 'A farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop.
But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop.'
2 Corinthians 9:6



Sutton Bengers CE Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Policy

2026 - 27

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Introduction

At Sutton Benger CE Primary School, we recognise that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides the foundations for children's future learning, development and wellbeing.

We are committed to providing a high-quality, inclusive and stimulating EYFS curriculum in which every child is valued as an individual and supported to flourish. We recognise that children enter school with different experiences, interests, knowledge, skills and developmental starting points. Our curriculum therefore builds on what children already know and can do, whilst providing carefully planned opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, vocabulary and dispositions they need for future learning.

Our EYFS provision combines high-quality adult-led teaching with purposeful play, exploration and child-initiated learning. We follow children's interests and fascinations while ensuring that our curriculum has clear progression and appropriate challenge. Through an enabling environment, positive relationships and carefully considered teaching, we aim to develop confident, curious, resilient and independent learners.

Our practice is underpinned by the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework alongside the Department for Education's non-statutory Development Matters guidance. The statutory framework sets the standards that schools must meet for children's learning, development, health and safety. Development Matters supports practitioners in understanding children's development and designing an effective curriculum.

Aims of the EYFS

Our EYFS provision aims to:

- provide every child with a secure, nurturing and inclusive start to their education;
- provide a curriculum that offers a wide range of rich experiences, enabling children to try new things, broaden their first-hand experiences and embrace new challenges;
- build on children's existing knowledge, skills and experiences;
- recognise that every child is unique and celebrate the diversity of our school community;
- develop children's communication, language, vocabulary and understanding;
- develop perseverance, self-belief, resilience and problem-solving skills;
- foster a lifelong love of learning;
- embed the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning;
- provide an enabling environment that encourages children to become independent learners and thinkers;
- develop positive relationships between children, adults and families;
- support children's emotional wellbeing and their ability to understand and regulate their feelings;
- provide appropriate challenge and support so that all children can achieve their potential;
- establish strong foundations for children's future learning and successful transition into Year 1 and beyond.

The EYFS Curriculum

The EYFS curriculum is organised around the seven areas of learning and development:

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas:

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

The seven areas are interconnected. The prime areas are particularly important for building strong foundations for learning, while the specific areas provide essential contexts through which children strengthen and apply their developing knowledge and skills.

Our curriculum is deliberately **knowledge-rich, skill-rich and vocabulary-rich**. We identify the essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary that children need to develop throughout Reception and ensure that these are progressively built upon. Children are given time to revisit, practise and deepen their learning. We use professional knowledge and assessment to identify what children need to learn next.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning are central to our EYFS curriculum. We support children to develop:

Playing and Exploring – Engagement

Children are encouraged to:

- investigate and experience things;
- develop their own ideas;
- make choices;
- explore what materials and resources can do;
- demonstrate curiosity and a willingness to have a go.

Active Learning – Motivation

Children are supported to:

- concentrate and persevere;
- remain motivated when challenges arise;
- develop resilience;
- enjoy achieving their goals;
- understand that mistakes and difficulties are part of the learning process.

Creating and Thinking Critically – Thinking

Children are encouraged to:

- make links between ideas;
- develop strategies for solving problems;
- predict, test and adapt their thinking;
- explain their ideas and reasoning;
- reflect on their learning and develop their own ideas.

These characteristics are developed throughout children's learning and experiences provided in our EYFS curriculum and classroom.

Our Approach to Teaching and Learning

We provide a carefully balanced combination of:

- adult-directed teaching;
- small-group and whole-class teaching;
- focused high-quality adult interactions;

- child-initiated learning;
- purposeful play;
- independent exploration;
- indoor and outdoor learning.

Children have daily opportunities for direct teaching in key areas including phonics, literacy and mathematics. Our phonics programme is Unlocking Letters and Sounds and ensures a progressive and focused approach to reading and writing using phonics. Other areas of learning are developed through a rich programme of continuous provision, enhancements and adult interactions. Children are given sufficient time to explore, practise, consolidate and apply their learning. Our teaching is responsive - adults observe what children know and understand, identify misconceptions or gaps, and adapt teaching accordingly. High-quality interactions, questioning, modelling, demonstration and vocabulary development are integral to our practice.

Planning

Our planning is informed by:

- the statutory EYFS educational programmes;
- Development Matters;
- our school's EYFS progression of knowledge, skills and vocabulary;
- children's starting points;
- assessment information;
- children's interests;
- identified gaps or misconceptions;
- the needs of individual children;
- observations and professional knowledge.

We use a mixed approach to planning that enables practitioners to respond to children's learning in real time while maintaining clear curriculum intent and progression:

- **In-the-Moment Planning** - adults respond to individual children's interests, ideas and learning as they occur. We recognise that some of the most powerful learning opportunities arise spontaneously and use these moments to maximise teaching and learning.
- **Objective-Led Planning** - adults identify specific learning intentions and weave these into children's exploring time and continuous provision. This allows children to develop targeted knowledge and skills within meaningful contexts.
- **Focused Group Teaching** - small-group activities are used where appropriate to provide additional teaching, practise specific skills or respond to identified learning needs.

The Enabling Environment

We recognise the environment as an important part of the curriculum. Our indoor and outdoor environments are carefully organised to encourage

- independence;
- curiosity;
- communication;
- collaboration;
- problem-solving;
- creativity;
- physical development;
- sustained shared thinking;
- exploration and investigation.

Children have access to a wide range of open-ended resources and purposeful experiences. Provision is adapted and enhanced in response to children's interests, developmental needs and current learning. Adults carefully consider how resources, displays and areas of provision can support children to revisit, practise and extend their learning independently. We place equal importance on indoor and outdoor learning. The outdoor environment provides opportunities for physical development, exploration, investigation, imaginative play and developing children's understanding of the natural world.

Relationships and Emotional Wellbeing

We strongly believe that children learn best when they feel safe, secure, valued and respected. Our EYFS environment is warm, caring and nurturing. Adults develop positive relationships with children and model kindness, respect, empathy and positive communication.

We support children to:

- recognise and name their feelings;
- develop emotional regulation;
- develop confidence and self-esteem;
- form positive relationships;
- manage challenges and setbacks;
- develop resilience and perseverance;
- understand the feelings and perspectives of others.

We celebrate children's achievements and recognise effort, perseverance and progress through our use of gem poers. We want every child to feel a strong sense of belonging and to know that they are a valued member of our school community.

Inclusion and Equality

Our EYFS provision is inclusive and ambitious for all children. We recognise and celebrate children's individual identities, cultures, experiences, interests and strengths. We provide appropriate adaptations, support and challenge to ensure that all children can participate fully in school life and make progress from their individual starting points. Our inclusive approach means that children learn together wherever possible, with additional support and scaffolding provided where appropriate. We ensure that reasonable adjustments and appropriate adaptations are made so that children with additional needs can access the curriculum and provision.

We identify children who may require additional support at an early stage and work closely with parents and relevant professionals where necessary. This may include the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo), speech and language professionals, health professionals and other external agencies.

Communication and Language

Communication and language are central to our EYFS curriculum. We recognise that language development underpins children's learning across all seven areas of the EYFS. We provide frequent opportunities for children to:

- listen attentively;
- develop their attention and understanding;
- learn and use new vocabulary;
- engage in conversations;
- express their ideas and feelings;
- develop confidence in speaking;
- listen and respond to others;
- develop an understanding of increasingly complex language.

Adults model high-quality spoken language and deliberately introduce and revisit vocabulary across the curriculum.

Literacy and Phonics

We develop a strong foundation in early reading and writing. Children receive daily systematic phonics teaching through Unlocking Letters and Sounds, alongside opportunities to apply their developing phonics knowledge throughout the provision.

Children are provided with rich opportunities to:

- develop phonological awareness;
- hear and enjoy high-quality stories, rhymes and poems;
- develop a love of books and reading;
- understand the purpose of writing;
- develop their mark-making and writing skills;
- develop letter-sound knowledge;
- apply phonics when reading and writing;
- develop vocabulary and comprehension.

Mathematics

We provide a strong foundation in mathematical understanding through both the explicit teaching of Mastering Number and meaningful opportunities within the provision. Mathematical concepts are revisited frequently so that children can develop depth of understanding and apply their knowledge in different contexts.

Children develop:

- a secure understanding of number;
- counting and cardinality;
- subitising;
- comparison;
- composition of number;
- numerical relationships;
- shape, space and measure;
- pattern;
- mathematical vocabulary;
- problem-solving and reasoning skills.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of our teaching and learning. We use formative assessment continuously to understand children's knowledge, skills and understanding and to identify appropriate next steps in teaching.

Assessment is based on:

- observation;
- professional knowledge and judgement;
- conversations with children;
- children's independent learning;
- adult-directed activities;
- information shared by parents and carers;
- progress over time.

At the end of Reception, teachers complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) in accordance with statutory requirements. The EYFSP provides a summary of children's attainment at the end of the EYFS and supports communication with parents and the child's next teacher. Teachers use their knowledge of each child, supported by a range of evidence collected throughout the year, to make professional judgements about children's attainment against the Early Learning Goals. We have high expectations for all children and aim for children to achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD). However, we recognise that each child is unique and that assessment outcomes are only one part of understanding a child's development and readiness for the next stage of learning.

Parental and Carer Partnership

We recognise parents and carers as children's first and most enduring educators. We aim to establish positive, open and respectful relationships with families and value the knowledge they have of their child.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- share information about their child's interests, experiences and achievements;
- contribute to their child's learning journal;
- discuss their child's learning and development with staff;
- support learning at home;
- communicate any concerns or significant changes that may affect their child's wellbeing or learning.

Parents have access to their child's learning journal, enabling them to engage in regular conversations about learning and contribute to the school's understanding of the child.

Where additional support is required, we involve parents at an early stage and work collaboratively to identify appropriate strategies and interventions.

Transition

We recognise that successful transitions are important to children's wellbeing and learning.

We have strong transition in place and support children as they:

- transition from home or an early years setting into Reception;
- develop relationships with their new teachers and peers;
- become familiar with routines and expectations;
- transition between Reception and Year 1.

Transition arrangements are carefully planned and take account of children's individual needs. Information about children's learning, development, interests and additional needs are shared appropriately with relevant staff to support continuity and progression.

Safeguarding and Welfare

The health, safety and wellbeing of children are central to our EYFS provision. All staff follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the current EYFS statutory framework.

Staff understand their responsibilities for:

- safeguarding children;
- recognising and reporting concerns;
- maintaining appropriate supervision;
- promoting children's health and wellbeing;
- maintaining safe and suitable environments;
- supporting children's personal care and independence;

- promoting good hygiene;
- supporting healthy lifestyles;
- ensuring appropriate arrangements for food and drink;
- following relevant first aid procedures;
- maintaining appropriate records.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that the EYFS statutory requirements are met and that the EYFS has an appropriate place within the school's curriculum and wider provision.

The EYFS Lead

The EYFS Lead is responsible for:

- leading and developing the EYFS curriculum;
- ensuring statutory requirements are met;
- supporting staff with planning, assessment and provision;
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning;
- monitoring children's progress;
- supporting staff professional development;
- ensuring effective transition arrangements;
- working with parents and relevant professionals.

EYFS Practitioners

All EYFS practitioners are responsible for:

- knowing the children well;
- providing high-quality interactions and teaching;
- maintaining a safe and enabling environment;
- observing and assessing children's learning;
- responding to children's interests and needs;
- supporting children's independence and wellbeing;
- communicating effectively with parents and colleagues;
- safeguarding children and following school procedures.

Governors

The governing body has oversight of the quality and effectiveness of EYFS provision and ensures that the school meets its statutory responsibilities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring is used to identify strengths, areas for development and appropriate actions to improve provision. We evaluate not only what children are learning but also the effectiveness of the curriculum, teaching, interactions and environment in supporting that learning.

The quality of EYFS provision is monitored through a range of activities, including:

- observation of teaching and learning;
- learning walks;
- discussion with staff and children;
- review of children's learning;
- analysis of assessment information;
- monitoring of provision and environments;

- review of curriculum progression;
- professional dialogue and moderation;
- feedback from parents and carers;
- review of children's outcomes.

Impact

At Sutton Benger CE Primary School, we aim for every child to flourish during their time in the EYFS. Our enriched, play-based curriculum, combined with high-quality adult-led teaching, provides a balanced range of learning experiences.

We aim to develop children who are:

- happy and confident;
- curious and enthusiastic;
- resilient and willing to persevere;
- increasingly independent;
- effective communicators;
- able to regulate their emotions;
- motivated to learn;
- equipped with the knowledge, skills and vocabulary needed for the next stage of their education.

We expect children to make good progress from their individual starting points. We use formative and summative assessment, professional judgement and information from parents and carers to evaluate children's learning and progress.

Our ultimate aim is that children leave the EYFS with secure foundations for future learning, a love of learning and the confidence to embrace new challenges.

22. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy has regard to the following statutory guidance and documents:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework**, Department for Education, effective from 1 September 2026.
- **Development Matters: Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage**, Department for Education.
- **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook**, Department for Education.
- Other relevant statutory safeguarding and education guidance applicable to schools in England.

The school will ensure that this policy is reviewed and updated when relevant statutory requirements or national guidance change.