



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Mission Statement

Botwell House Catholic Primary School is distinguished by the care, courtesy and concern extended to all its members, regardless of cultural differences and strives to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ to:

“Love one another as I have loved you”

Through an effective partnership between home, school and parish and through a broad and balanced curriculum, each valued individual is encouraged to grow in their journey of faith and strive towards excellence.

Botwell House Catholic Primary School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her potential.

Current revision:	October 2022
Date for further revision:	October 2025
Delegated to:	Curriculum and Standards Committee
Reviewer:	Sian Bridger AHT-EYFS-KS1

Contents

1. Aims:.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2. Legislation:.....	3
3. Structure of the EYFS:.....	3
4. EYFS Principles:.....	3
5. Curriculum:	4-6
6. Staffing and Organisation:.....	7
7. Inclusion:.....	7-8
8. Assessment:	8
9. Working with parents:.....	8-9
10. Transition:	9
11. Allocation:	9
12. Safeguarding and welfare procedures:.....	10
13. Monitoring arrangements:.....	10
Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for EYFS	10

1. Aims:

At Botwell House Catholic Primary School we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and deserves the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. We understand that children develop quickly in the early years and a child's early experiences have a major impact on their future life chances. This is a crucial time for developing their enjoyment of learning so that our children become happy and healthy well-rounded individuals with skills for the ever changing 21st century.

This policy aims to ensure:

- That our children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the varied range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress from their starting points, with each child being included and supported to achieve their potential.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Opportunities to play and learn together are maximized for "Play is the work of the child," (Maria Montessori)

2. Legislation:

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

3. Structure of the EYFS:

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, children join our Nursery class at the beginning of the school year that the child is three years old and join one of our three Reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal from their first educators, their families and from experiences outside of the home such as attending local family play groups, attending day care nursery settings or being with child minders. The Early Years are a special time for all children, where a thirst for life-long learning adventures with the world can be developed.

4. EYFS Principles:

Our Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following overarching principles:

- **A Unique Child**

At Botwell House Catholic Primary school, we recognise that every child is constantly learning and can develop as resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We strive to build on what our children already know and can do through providing fun and challenging activities. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning and a positive attitude to self. We believe that all our children matter and we value the diversity of individuals within the school.

- **Positive Relationships**

At Botwell House Catholic Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children and we value being partners with them in their child's education.

- **Enabling Environments**

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We provide a safe and stimulating enabling environment that supports the learning in EYFS. This supports child initiation. EYFS classrooms and outdoor areas are planned to provide a continuous provision to match the needs and interests of our cohorts. Changes with enhancements to provision happen in response to information gathered from observing the children and assessing their ongoing needs and development.

5. Curriculum:

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that was introduced September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, forming relationships and thriving.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

5.1 Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the nursery and reception teachers seek opportunities to both model these skills as learners themselves and celebrate the achievements of the children displaying them. The characteristics highlight the importance of 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 will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They

express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. Staff spend time playing alongside and with the children. This provides opportunities to model. Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.

Active Learning: children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking: we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and experiences. Children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions such as, "I wonder why..." Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

5.2 Planning

Long Term Planning: We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six terms and the educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to determine broad and balanced coverage.

Medium Term Planning: We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for Technology. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning: We identify specific learning objectives and plan activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day

Good planning is key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by contributions from home, from the children themselves and from observations and interactions we have with the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning.

Staff plan activities and experiences in our continuous provision for EYFS children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children focus strongly on the 3 prime areas (Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional development). Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, using information gained from families, previous year group and observation in order to plan challenging and enjoyable learning experiences based on first hand opportunities.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences both indoors and outdoors, to encourage opportunities to talk and explore, to collaboratively learn with others in a fun and active way. We aim to develop positive attitudes to learning, confidence, social skills and communication. The environment is skilfully designed to foster basic skills using continuous provision and is routinely enhanced as interests and children's skills develop throughout their time with us. The enhanced learning environments depict both thematic and the children's interests.

The environment promotes features of the local environment as a context which can then be explored with the wider world. We ensure that first-hand learning experiences and the use of real life objects are

promoted within our environments. Such careful planning of the continuous provision facilitates learning opportunities through play and further expands children's language skills and understanding of the world around them.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

5.3 Teaching

Timetabled teaching for groups/whole class in EYFS are adapted based on the needs of each cohort and the age of pupils within the setting. At designated times when settled, the children come together to be taught and we focus Literacy, Math's, Phonics, R.E, Personal Social and Emotional development in addition to exploring topic themes. These times provide the opportunity for children to develop their ability to work as a group to listen, to develop partner work to take turns and to develop oracy skills. We ensure there is a balance of child- initiated learning through continuous provision, and adult-led activities, across the school day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential. The adults respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing promoting language development. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to complete an activity with them; at other times they will participate in the child's play, extending it where possible. We see our Early Years staff as "co-adventurers". As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, in preparation for the next stage of the children's schooling journey.

We live out our mission statement acting out Jesus' words to "Love one another as I have loved you," which we endeavour to achieve by showing "care, courtesy and concern" for all. In PSED we promote relationships with peers and adults based on the teachings of how Jesus taught us to treat one another. We promote emotional literacy so that we can recognize feelings in ourselves and others so that we can begin to manage our emotions (self-regulate,) effectively and relationships can be developed and maintained. We promote independence in self-care and through planned physical challenges and cooking opportunities we explore how we can make healthy choices for life.

Religious Education in our school is an integral part of our ethos, aims and relationships, as Christian values permeate all aspects of the curriculum and all relationships. Religious Education is undertaken through daily prayers, the celebration of Mass, sharing stories from the Bible, learning hymns and play opportunities in continuous provision enhancements and Religious Education lessons. This helps our children to develop religious understanding of their faith and that of others. There are numerous cross curricular activities that deepen the children's understanding that stem from Religious Education lessons, such as drama, writing, technology, art and music. Thus our children have a diversity of experience that support their development and understating of their Catholic faith.

In Literacy we prioritise the teaching of early reading, through synthetic phonics using RWI and have an overwhelming focus on vocabulary enrichment based on the low starting points of our children's expressive language and the high level of EAL. Our topics enable us to select core reading books that we return to develop familiarity with language structure. In Reception we imitate, innovate and invent stories through a Talk for Writing approach as we want our children to leave the EYFS knowing both traditional and modern classic stories well. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story during the day, as well as opportunities to enjoy books within the continuous provision

In Maths we follow the NCETM maths approach "Mastering number," to ensure that children develop a depth of understanding of key mathematical concepts and skills. This ensures our staff have sound mathematical pedagogical knowledge and are confident to support and extend children's mathematical learning through their play and supporting children's progression and preparation for key stage 1.

5.4. Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

5.5 Environment

The EYFS classroom and outdoor areas are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Each Nursery and Reception class have their own enclosed outdoor area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access that help them to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

6. Staffing and Organisation:

We have a 90 place Nursery with two Nursery Sessions (8.45am – 11.45am. 12.30pm – 3.30pm) with one qualified teacher and three support staff giving an adult to child ratio of 1:13. There are three Reception classes each with 30 places. There is one qualified teacher per class supported by a full time Teaching Assistant/Early Years Practitioner. Staff members work as a team in order to plan effective provision, prepare resources and review assessments.

7. Curriculum:

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We aim to 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 children's learning needs. We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We monitor children's progress and take action to support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Inclusion manager or the SENCO and seek advice from outside

agencies, such as the speech and language service and the educational psychologist amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

8. Assessment:

We gather information from families and prior settings to gain insights into children's strengths before entry to our EYFS provision. Following a careful induction transition into our EYFS, when children are happy and ready to learn (Leuven scales,) the children are carefully assessed through observations and adult-paired activities to accurately identify their starting points. This informs the teacher's planning for daily maths, literacy, PD skills including handwriting development, and phonics sessions, as well as their whole class regular reading and sharing of stories which promote rich language extensions.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

Throughout nursery and reception children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters' and 'Birth to 5 Matters'. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Through the use of OWL strategy, (Observe, wait, listen), adults engage with children within their play to develop new skills including language enrichment. It is through these quality interactions that staff deploy in the moment teaching opportunities that are pertinent to the range of learners. Staff celebrate moments of significance to the children's learning through uploading of observations onto Tapestry to be shared by families.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with families. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#) and Birth to 5 guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

9. Working with parents:

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents/carers. We recognise how parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators. Therefore, we see such adults/carer's as important partners in children's learning. Hence, we value parent's opinions and the information they give us and involve them wherever possible. When parents/carers and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on their child's development and learning. Some examples of partnership co-operation include;

- Opportunities to meet class teacher in meetings before starting in a class through 1:1 home visits or group stay and play sessions.

* Newsletters are circulated to parents on a regular basis and can be accessed on the school website.

- Learning is celebrated on Tapestry both at school and home. Images of children are taken as part of their usual daily routine at school, for the purposes of their Tapestry journals. Images are captured using the school's I-Pads.

* Half –termly ways to help and key vocabulary for thematic teaching at school is shared with families.

* Parents are invited to join children within their class for events such as “reading mornings” and creative making sessions.

Parents/ carers are kept up to date with their child’s progress and development. Parent Meetings enable two way dialogues to be engaged to best promote the child’s current stage of development and the next stage. Parents are more than welcome to make an appointment during term time to discuss any other matters relating to their child.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child’s development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

10. Transitions

At any transition, we acknowledge the children’s needs and establish effective partnerships between families and those involved with the children and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children and parents/carers attend introductory sessions to nursery and reception to develop familiarity with the setting and staff. Children new to our EYFS receive a home visit/ by their new teaching staff before starting school to begin to forge good working relationships with parents and carers and to greet the children individually. It is through these visits/virtual visits that information of a child’ likes and dislikes can be established and ways to support each individual child with the transition to our school community can begin.

The transition to Nursery and Reception occurs over a period of weeks and works differently across the two year groups. These transition periods allow the children to settle in and adjust to routines, rules and the school environment. It also allows staff to get to know the children in a smaller group, and begin to observe and assess the children.

Nursery: Intake of our children is staggered over a number of weeks so parents will receive different starting dates throughout September. Children commence their transition into the setting with a stay and play with their parent/carer before moving onto independent visits to the nursery. Once the child is happy and more confident to be left at Nursery, the time is increased to the maximum of a 3-hour session.

Reception: Intake of our children is staggered over the period of a week after an initial stay and play with their parent and carer over one half day. Children then begin Reception over a few days, with typically 10 children starting on each day staying for lunch to begin then being increased to the whole day the following week.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 and EYFS staff meet to discuss each child's development against the early learning goals in order to support a smooth transition to year 1. This discussion enables the new teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all pupils transitioning to Year 1. Transition visits by the class are made to their new classroom and visits by the Year 1 teacher for story times are built into the transition process also.

11. Allocation

Children are allocated their group in the Nursery based on their session preference and availability. In Reception, children are divided into two classes ensuring as close a balance as possible with gender, age and English as an additional language (EAL) or known special educational or disability needs.

12. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- How to brush teeth and why it is important for good oral hygiene to visit a dentist.
- Preparing a range of treat foods and healthy foods as part of our planned cooking curriculum which links to key texts and our topics.

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Sian Bridger every three years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Curriculum and Standards Committee.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy