

Ben Jonson Primary School



Early Years Policy

Date reviewed: November 2025

EYFS Vision

The ethos in EY is for us as practitioners to create an environment in which children can explore the world through engaging and purposeful play-based activities. We aim to give children opportunities to develop their skills, improve their knowledge of their familiar world and to pursue their individual interests.

We believe that play is integral to ensuring children are engaged in learning and our role as practitioners is to support them in developing the skills they will need to be lifelong learners.

Alongside this play-based approach we promote the enjoyment of learning by:

- Introducing the school values; children will develop as Brave, Kind and Curious learners
- Having the highest expectations of achievement and success
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide activities that build upon and extend children's knowledge and experience
- Supporting children to develop their self-esteem and confidence and begin to take ownership of their own learning
- Planning challenging activities to support all children to achieve their goals

Enrichment, Community and the Wider World

Our school is in a multicultural community. It is also part of a great world city. We want to take every opportunity to make the most of this unique combination to enhance learning and give our pupils the confidence to take their place in the wider world and make the most of opportunities as they move forward into the wider world.

To this end we offer aspirational and inspirational trips, experiences and activities in and around London, starting local and then expanding across to other areas of London. This enrichment will broaden and support our pupil's choices in further education, the world of work, participation in art, culture and enjoyment of leisure pursuits.

To support these aims in EYFS we visit local sites such as our local supermarket, the farm, the theatre, our local church, the Cutty Sark and local parks such as Shandy Park, Mile End Children's Park and Victoria Park.

Each year our Reception children take part in the Nativity, which they perform to their parents and the rest of the school.

Curriculum Framework

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

Prime Areas of Learning

-  Personal, Social and Emotional Development
-  Communication and Language

Physical Development

Specific Areas of Learning

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

The EYFS takes into account 3 characteristics of effective teaching and 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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. Children are encouraged to always give things a try first before asking an adult.

Teaching and learning

Skills

- Continuous provision follows the children's interests and encourages talking, questioning and the development of curious and open minds.
- Sustained play gives them time to engage in extended activities, developing and revisiting their ideas
- We offer problem solving activities (eg building a bridge for the troll to live under)
- Children can choose to be inside or outside for the majority of their time in EYFS
- We provide open ended resources to stimulate collaborative play and developing teamwork
- Teachers use the ShREC approach to promote high quality interactions with young children
- Teachers use the Restorative Justice approach and the Zones of Regulation to help support children with conflict resolution and emotional regulation.
- Adults support children/s play through effective questioning, scaffolding and modelling

School Readiness

Whilst EYFS is a distinct phase of education we are still very much part of the whole school, and we take part in whole school themes, events, assemblies, and celebrations.

We provide children with the basic numeracy, literacy skills and learning behaviours they need in order for them to access the school curriculum as they move through the school. We introduce the children to whole school policies and practises such as the behaviour expectations, movement around the school building and silent signals.

Links with English

In the EYFS we focus on supporting children in developing the initial skills they need to go on to become confident readers and writers. Through daily story time we develop the children's understanding of stories. In Reception we share a big book that is used to teach the children the

concepts of reading, before starting our guided reading sessions with small groups later in the academic year.

Writing in the EYFS includes mark making using a variety of tools and surfaces. As children move into Reception we narrow our focus to helping them in forming clear and recognisable letters and writing simple sentences. We provide opportunities for the children to write for a variety of purposes e.g making lists, captions, labels and cards.

These types of writing activities are first introduced to the children through shared writing activities and then activities are set up during free flow to give children the opportunity to try writing independently. Where possible, subject knowledge is consolidated with the use of linked non-fiction texts and web-based resources.

From Nursery children are introduced to phonics through Letters and Sounds Phase 1 and then progress into the RWI phonics programme.

The literacy curriculum is focused around story books, chosen to support the half termly topics that are taught throughout the year, that also provide rich cross curricular learning opportunities.

Links with Maths

In the EYFS we understand that maths is part of our everyday lives and can be included in all activities. We ensure there are opportunities to explore maths at all times in the day, such as self-registration, tidy up time, and the daily timetable and routines. We ensure that on a weekly basis there are elements of number and shape included in the continuous provision. Each classroom has maths resources that are accessible to the children, which they are free to access and explore independently.

The Role of the Adult

When children enter the Early Years they will be assigned a key person with the aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. The key person will be responsible for particular children ensuring that they feel special, individual and cared for, someone who is affectionate and reliable whilst the child is away from home. They will also be responsible for helping to settle their key children initially in Nursery and Reception.

In the Early Years, we work as a team to best meet the needs of the individual children. All adults will have some involvement in the planning process, as well as the implementation. Communication between staff is a vital tool in this process.

The majority of our cohort join Reception from our nursery school so there are opportunities for staff to build relationships with the children throughout their year in nursery. It also allows staff to ask questions and have a handover meeting about the children who will be moving up to Reception. The EYFS team regularly meet to discuss new intake children, assessments, policies and protocols. We aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children's achievements before they come to Ben Jonson.

Children new to Ben Jonson in Reception

Children who join Ben Jonson in Reception who did not attend our Nursery provision will receive a home visit before they start. This is to ensure they are afforded the opportunity to begin to build relationships with staff before they enter the setting. It will also enable the staff to begin to build their understanding of individual children's needs and interests so they can plan accordingly to meet their

needs. Further to this, children will be given staggered starting dates to ensure they receive as much time to build relationships and attachments with their key worker and other school staff while they settle in.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet as well as rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to locate and use equipment and resources independently. Each class has a door that leads on to the outdoor area. Children have an opportunity to use both the indoors and outdoors equally.

This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It allows the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Progression and Sequence of Learning

Home visits, admissions meetings and settling visits feed into the initial planning for Nursery at the start of the academic year. This is done at an individual level for each child. Following The Development Matters EYFS Framework, we have created our own bespoke curriculum to suit the needs of our children. This ensures that we provide a curriculum that is progressive across the EYFS and allows the children to build on their skills and prior knowledge from Nursery through to the end of Reception. Topics are chosen based on the skills, knowledge and concepts that they will need in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals. At the start of Nursery we choose topics that are meaningful to the children and that they can easily relate to and engage in.

At the start of the year our topics focus on children's real life experiences, likes and interests (All About Me) and topics that will broaden their understanding of the world (Festivals and Celebrations). The remaining topics are sequenced to follow key events, seasons and celebrations throughout the year. This gives children opportunities to experience their learning first hand – eg Christmas, Autumn, World Book Day.

Tapestry

We ensure progression through the stages of learning using Tapestry, an online platform for planning, assessment and recording progress in EYFS.

Children's learning is recorded through observations, focused activities and contributions from home. Next steps are identified and shared with Parents and caregivers.

Planning

In the EYFS we have a Curriculum Overview which we use as a skeleton to support the development of the Medium Term Plan. We also have 'Weaving the Web', our own bespoke curriculum that sets out the learning objectives and expectations by half term.

The EYFS has a focus on child-led learning so alongside these documents we rely on observations of children to inform our planning on a weekly basis. Consideration has been made for the transition to Year 1 to ensure consolidation of learning whilst avoiding unnecessary repetition.

Prior Knowledge and Retention of Learning

Following on from the baseline assessment carried out when children arrive in Nursery, we continually observe and assess children's progress. Building on their prior knowledge and experience we then provide activities that move them through the stages of learning, whilst still valuing their interests and preferences.

Key topics and skills are revisited throughout the year as new children join our setting and children have an opportunity to continue to develop and build on their existing knowledge and skills. Our continuous provision lends itself to children being able to explore and consolidate any learning done as part of adult lead focus activities.

Marking, Assessment and Record Keeping

Ongoing Assessment

Achievements, progress and interests are carefully monitored throughout the year against the EYFS Framework via observations and adult led activities. This informs our weekly planning, objectives covered and our theme. Parents are then informed of these in Tapestry, the school Twitter feed and parent information letters.

Coverage of the EYFS statements are carefully monitored and recorded so that complete and fair coverage of the curriculum is achieved during the year. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observations, and this involves the teacher/nursery nurse and other adults as appropriate. These observations are mostly recorded on the children's individual profiles on Tapestry which is the primary tool used to track and record assessments. Tapestry journals may also contain information provided by parents and in particular focus on 'significant' moments and events for the child.

We also keep floor books so the children have physical input into their learning, and they can independently access the books to revisit and look at their achievements.

Pupil Assessment Tracker

In EYFS we use the Tapestry app to help track the children and ensure they are being observed across all areas of the Development Matters framework on a regular basis. It is also used to ensure that teachers can identify and address any gaps.

In the Early Years we have 3 assessment points where children's learning is tracked electronically and discussed with SLT. We use Insight Tracking to input our data and then look at key groups of children to plan to meet their next steps and address any gaps in their learning. Children that are identified as working significantly below age related expectations are discussed and relevant support and intervention is put into place to promote accelerated progress.

In Reception each child's level of development is recorded against the EYFS Early Learning Goals at the end of the academic year. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written report to parents, reporting children's progress and attainment. In Reception, in the final Summer term, we provide a written report to parents reporting children's progress and attainment against the Early Learning Goals. We give reasonable opportunities for the parents to discuss these judgements with their child's class teacher, giving them the opportunity to book a meeting with the class teacher towards the end of the academic year.

Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning is monitored through planning and classroom observations. The post holder and members of the SMT do this. Feedback will be given highlighting strengths and areas that need developing.

Special Education Needs and Disability

Ben Jonson Primary School is committed to providing an appropriate and high quality education to all children. All children receive high quality differentiated teaching in the classroom targeted at their needs. Children identified as having additional needs, will have support in class including; pre-teaching concepts and vocabulary in small groups, instructions simplified, visual timetables and task schedules, now and next boards, visual word banks, number lines, concrete objects and/or additional support from adults in the classroom.

Some children will receive interventions outside the classroom, e.g. speech and language sessions, to enable them to access the curriculum. A few children with complex SEND may have 1:1 adult support to enable them to access learning in class, and a small minority of these children will have an adapted curriculum to meet their needs.

Resources

Most EYFS resources and equipment are located in the classrooms or other accessible rooms attached.

Staff must ensure that the learning environment for EYFS provides safe working practices and is in accordance with the schools Health and Safety Policy. Safety equipment must be worn when necessary. When planning lessons, staff need to adhere to any safety warnings, be aware of any allergies and complete risk assessments for any activities that may involve risk or food.

Parental Involvement

A welcome meeting is held in the first half term for parents and carers, and then there are 2 parents meetings in the Spring and Summer terms where they have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress. Parental support is encouraged on class trips and other in school events. We encourage parents to contribute to their children's Online Tapestry Journal by uploading pictures, videos or work that their child has done at home.

- Stay and Play sessions for parents
- Tapestry parent contributions
- Parents on trips
- Parent reading mornings once a week
- Curriculum workshops

Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy

This policy will be monitored through e.g. planning, book scrutiny, lesson observations, moderation meetings, drop in by the SLT, learning walks, as well as keeping abreast of national policy changes.

This policy will be evaluated through termly or annual reports by the post holder to the Headteacher and Governing Body. This evaluation will also inform school priorities.