



BITTERLEY C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love" (1 Corinthians 16:13-14)

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

Name of school Bitterley CE Primary

Date of policy October 2026

Member of staff responsible Mrs West

Review date October 2027

1. Aims and Vision

Our EYFS setting aims to provide a safe, challenging, and inclusive environment where children can thrive. We believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life to support and fulfil their potential.

We aim to:

- Provide a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum.
- Foster a love of learning through playful, purposeful activities.
- Build strong, respectful partnerships between staff, parents, and carers.
- Ensure equality of opportunity so no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- To foster a close working partnership between staff and parents and / or carers.

2. The Curriculum

Our curriculum is structured around the seven areas of learning and development as outlined in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS.

The Prime Areas (fundamental for all learning):

- **Communication and Language:** Developing listening, attention, vocabulary, and speaking skills.
- **Physical Development:** Improving gross and fine motor skills, health, and self-care.
- **Personal, Social, and Emotional Development:** Building relationships, self-regulation, and confidence.

The Specific Areas (applied through the prime areas):

- **Literacy:** Comprehension, word reading, and writing.
- **Mathematics:** Numbers, numerical patterns, and spatial reasoning.
- **Understanding the World:** Exploring past/present, cultures, and the natural world.
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** Creating with materials and expressing imagination.

Screen Use and Digital Technology

We recognise the importance of managing screen time appropriately in the early years.

Our approach to screen use is guided by the DfE's guidance on screen use for early years providers.

Our principles for screen use:

- Screen time is limited and purposeful, supporting specific learning objectives
- We prioritise hands-on, interactive experiences and real-world learning
- Any screen-based activities are carefully selected to be age-appropriate and educational
- We communicate with parents about our approach to screen use and encourage healthy screen habits at home
- Staff are trained to use technology appropriately to support children's learning and development

3. Teaching, Learning, and Play

We deliver our curriculum through a balanced mix of:

- **Child-Led Play:** Children explore, take risks, and learn through their own current issues and passions.
- **Adult-Led Learning:** Structured sessions designed to teach specific skills or knowledge.
- **Characteristics of Effective Learning:** Staff observe and support *how* children learn via playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically.

4. Planning

Our planning is centred around the individual interests, passions and developmental needs of the children, ensuring high levels of engagement and meaningful learning experiences. We carefully observe and respond to children's fascinations, using these as a foundation for flexible and responsive planning. To ensure the breadth of the curriculum is fully covered, we introduce thoughtful provocations that spark curiosity, extend learning, and encourage exploration across all areas of development. Alongside this, we provide targeted small-group sessions focusing on core skills such as early phonics, communication and language, and mathematics. These adult-led opportunities support children to build key knowledge and skills, promoting confidence and independence while ensuring they are well prepared for the transition to Reception Class and overall school readiness.

5. Assessment and Progress Tracking

Assessment in our nursery is ongoing, meaningful, and used to inform future planning.

- **Formative Assessment:** Staff look, listen, and note milestones without creating excessive paperwork.
- **Parent Partnerships:** We use Tapestry to share learning and invite parents to contribute observations from home.
- **Summative Reporting:** We share regular progress updates and provide a written summary of the child's development at the end of the year.
- **Progress Check at Aged Two:** Between the age of two- and three-years parents will be provided with a written review of their child's development and progress in the 3 prime areas of the EYFS Framework. This is to identify any area of concern or additional developmental needs. Parents are invited in to discuss the written view, and we work with parents and other professionals to put in place appropriate support and interventions where needed.

6. Working with Parents and Carers

Working in partnership with parents is a key priority in our EYFS classroom, as we recognise that parents are children's first and most important educators. We value

open, two-way communication and regularly share children's learning, progress and achievements through informal conversations, updates and structured meetings. We actively encourage parents to share information about their child's interests, experiences and development at home, which supports us in creating meaningful and personalised learning opportunities. By building strong, respectful relationships with families, we ensure a consistent approach to learning and development, helping every child to feel secure, supported and confident in their early education journey.

Collection Arrangements

We require all parents and carers to provide written details of who is authorised to collect their child from our EYFS setting. This is an important safeguarding measure to ensure children are only released to appropriate adults.

Parents must:

- Provide a list of authorised people who may collect their child
- Inform us in advance of any changes to usual collection arrangements
- Notify us if their child will be collected by someone not on the authorised list
- Provide written consent if they wish their child to leave with an older sibling

Full details of our collection procedures, including what happens if a child is not collected on time, can be found in Section 7 (Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements).

7. Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

The safety and well-being of our children is paramount. We strictly adhere to the statutory welfare requirements:

- **Staff Ratios:** We maintain statutory staff-to-child ratios at all times and allow for a more generous ratio when needed to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of all children.
- **Key Person System:** Each child is assigned a Key Person to ensure their care and emotional needs are met.
- **Health and Safety:** Clear procedures are followed for risk assessments, administering medication, first aid, and managing accidents. All Nursery staff have current Paediatric First Aid Training certificates.
- **Safer Eating:** Staff supervise all mealtimes and snacks to manage choking hazards and severe allergies.
- **Allergy Safety:** From September 2026, we comply with Benedict's Law and the DfE's statutory guidance on allergy safety in schools. We:
 - Have a dedicated allergy policy (available on our website)
 - Ensure all children with allergies have individual healthcare plans
 - Provide regular allergy awareness training for all staff
 - Record serious incidents or near misses involving allergies
 - Have appointed a senior leader responsible for allergy safety
 - Stock 'spare' adrenaline devices (auto-injector pens)
 - Work closely with parents to manage allergies safely
 - Supervise all mealtimes and snacks carefully to manage choking hazards and severe allergies

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding:** We follow updated safeguarding requirements from September 2026. All staff receive regular safeguarding training in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026. All staff must now read part 1 of KCSIE in full. Any concerns are reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). We have a designated Deputy DSL in our Early Years setting. Our safeguarding procedures include:
 - Understanding that pupils with SEND or additional vulnerabilities may face additional barriers to recognising or reporting abuse
 - New guidance on responding to children who are questioning their gender, single-sex facilities and sports participation
 - Responding appropriately to harmful sexual behaviour and serious violence
 - Understanding the risks associated with AI use
 - Following our child protection policy, which is available on our website
- **Whistle-blowing:** We follow updated whistle-blowing requirements from September 2026. All staff are aware of our whistle-blowing procedures and know how to raise concerns about the practice or behaviour of staff or volunteers. Staff can raise concerns confidentially and will be protected from victimisation. Our whistle-blowing policy is available from the school office.
- **Mobile Phones and Devices:** We have a policy which sets out that we are mobile phone-free by default, in line with KCSIE 2026 expectations. Staff personal mobile phones are not permitted in areas where children are present. Staff use school devices for taking photographs and recording observations in line with our online safety and data protection policies. Parents are asked not to use mobile phones when collecting or dropping off their children in our EYFS setting.

While our setting does not currently care for children under 2 years old, we have procedures in place to meet safer sleep requirements should we admit younger children in the future.

Collection of Children and Procedures for Uncollected Children"

Collection arrangements:

The safety and welfare of children in our care is paramount. We have clear procedures in place to ensure children are only released to authorised adults.

Our collection procedures include:

- Parents/carers must provide written details of all adults authorised to collect their child, including emergency contacts
- We ask parents/carers to provide photographs of authorised collectors to help staff verify identity
- Staff will ask for identification if they do not recognise the person collecting a child
- We will not release a child to anyone not on the authorised list without prior written or verbal permission from the parent/carer (verified by the school office)
- Parents/carers must inform us in advance of any changes to collection arrangements

- If collection arrangements are contested between separated parents, we will follow the procedures set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and only release children in accordance with any court orders in place

Age limits for collectors:

While it is legal for someone under 16 to collect a child, we set the following age limits:

- Children may only be collected by someone aged 16 or over, unless prior written permission has been given by the parent/carer and a risk assessment has been completed by the school

Uncollected children:

If a child is not collected at the end of a session, we will follow this procedure:

Within the first 15 minutes:

- The child will be cared for by a member of staff in a safe, supervised area
- We will attempt to contact the parent/carer using all contact numbers provided
- We will contact emergency contacts if we cannot reach the parent/carer

After 15 minutes:

- We will continue to attempt to contact the parent/carer and emergency contacts
- The child will remain in the care of at least two members of staff
- We will keep a record of the incident, including times of attempted contacts

After 1 hour:

- If we have been unable to contact the parent/carer or any emergency contacts, and we have no information about the reason for the delay, we will contact Shropshire Council's Children's Services for advice
- In exceptional circumstances, if we have serious concerns about the child's welfare, we may contact the police

Throughout this process:

- The child will be kept safe, calm, and reassured
- Staff will not leave the premises with the child or take them to their own home
- At least two members of staff will remain with the child at all times
- We will record all actions taken and conversations held

Persistent late collection:

If a parent/carer is persistently late collecting their child (more than 3 occasions in a half term), we will:

- Arrange a meeting with the parent/carer to discuss the issue and identify any support needed
- Remind parents/carers of their responsibilities and our procedures
- Consider whether this raises any safeguarding concerns that need to be addressed
- Keep records of late collections and actions taken

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child is collected on time. Persistent late collection may be considered a safeguarding concern under our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Missing children:

In the unlikely event that a child goes missing from our EYFS setting, we will follow our Missing Child Procedure:

Immediate action (first 5 minutes):

- Alert all staff immediately
- Conduct a thorough search of the building and outdoor areas

- Check all exits, toilets, and potential hiding places
- Ensure all other children are accounted for and safe
- Check the signing in/out records

If the child is not found within 5 minutes:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL will be informed immediately
- Contact the child's parents/carers
- Continue searching the immediate vicinity of the school
- Review CCTV footage if available

If the child is not found within 15 minutes:

- Contact the police (999)
- Contact Shropshire Council's Children's Services
- The headteacher will coordinate the response
- Preserve any evidence that may help locate the child

After the incident:

- A full investigation will be conducted to establish how the incident occurred
- A written report will be completed and shared with parents/carers, governors, and relevant authorities
- We will review our procedures and risk assessments to prevent future incidents
- Any learning will be shared with all staff
- The incident will be recorded in line with our safeguarding procedures

Prevention measures:

To prevent children going missing, we:

- Maintain appropriate staff-to-child ratios at all times
- Conduct regular headcounts, particularly during transitions and outdoor play
- Ensure all exits are secured and monitored
- Have clear procedures for arrivals and departures
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities for supervising children
- Conduct regular risk assessments of our premises and outdoor areas
- Teach children about staying safe and staying with adults

Record keeping:

We maintain accurate records of:

- Children's attendance (signing in and out)
- Authorised collectors for each child
- Any incidents of late collection
- Any incidents where a child has gone missing (however briefly)
- All actions taken in response to incidents

These records are kept securely and in line with our data protection policies.

8. Inclusion and Equality

We value the diversity of our school community. We adjust our environment and teaching to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or those who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL). Specific activities are planned for children that need targeted interventions, such as Early Talk Boost.

Supporting children with SEND:

We follow a graduated approach to identifying and supporting children with SEND:

- **Assess:** We observe and assess children's needs, working with parents and external professionals where appropriate
- **Plan:** We agree the support to be provided and expected outcomes
- **Do:** We deliver targeted support through our curriculum and specific interventions
- **Review:** We review progress regularly with parents and adjust support as needed

We work closely with external agencies including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, health visitors, and specialist SEND services to ensure children receive the support they need.

Children with medical conditions:

We support children with medical conditions to access all aspects of our EYFS provision. All children with medical conditions have individual healthcare plans that are developed in partnership with parents and healthcare professionals. Staff receive training on specific medical conditions as needed.

Equality and diversity:

We actively promote equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity. We ensure our curriculum, resources, and environment reflect the diverse backgrounds of our children and the wider community. We challenge stereotypes and discrimination and teach children to value and respect differences.

9. Online Safety

We follow KCSIE 2026 guidance on online safety recognising that even our youngest children may be exposed to online content and risks.

Our approach to online safety includes:

- Teaching age-appropriate online safety messages as part of our curriculum
- Managing screen use appropriately (see Section 2)
- Using technology safely, including secure devices for taking photographs and observations
- Understanding the risks associated with AI use in schools
- Working with parents to promote consistent messages about online safety at home
- Following our online safety policy (available on our website)
- Ensuring staff are trained to recognise and respond to online safety concerns

Parents can find more information about keeping children safe online in our online safety guidance for parents [available on our website/from the school office].

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance or our provision. It was last reviewed in October 2026.

