



Bishop Bronescombe C of E School



EYFS Policy

Reviewed:	April 2026	Reviewed by:	Rebecca Burr
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In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do.

Our school vision is ‘We share the gifts and talents that we have, and with God’s help, it can become something amazing!’



School Aims

At Bishop Bronescombe School we aim to give all children:

- Access to a rich curriculum which enthuses and equips them for life as citizens in the 21st century.
- Opportunities to explore their own developing Christian faith and to have respect for the faith of others.
- High self-esteem by feeling valued as a member of our school.
- A sense of fair play, treating others with dignity and respect.
- The chance to enjoy taking part in a vibrant, forward-looking school, moving their learning forwards.

Bishop Bronescombe C of E School’s motto is: **‘Learning that lasts a lifetime’.**

General policy statement

All staff, governors, volunteer helpers, students and visitors need to give due regard to all of the policies and practices adopted by the school. Whilst it is acknowledged that people other than staff cannot be expected to read every policy before a visit to the school, it may be that further guidelines are necessary in addition to the Visitor Policy, which all visitors must acknowledge and accept upon arrival. All staff carry

responsibility for the welfare and success of the pupils in our school. Staff will advise anyone who is working alongside us of the necessary protocols, procedures and policies we follow.

Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

This is arguably the most important stage of education provided by our school. It gives every child a firm foundation for successful learning, including motivation, positive dispositions, and an open approach to lifelong learning. The Foundation Stage deserves, and is given, a high priority in our school.

Across our Early Years provision at Bishop Bronescombe, our ethos is to offer every child:

‘a nurturing environment where children play, learn and thrive.’

Intent

In our Early Years at Bishop Bronescombe, we offer a nurturing, homely, caring environment where children are supported to flourish, learn and grow. We pride ourselves in offering a bespoke curriculum, giving children an abundance of quality learning opportunities which are tailored around their individual needs and interests. In line with our school vision, we support each child to nurture and share their unique gifts and talents, and we endeavor to celebrate each child and their personal achievements. While in reception, children are introduced to our school Christian Values (perseverance, courage, trust, compassion, respect and forgiveness), which underpin everything we do at Bishop Bronescombe. We promote an inclusive ethos and approach to learning for all of our children to ensure that no individual is excluded or disadvantaged. Furthermore, we provide opportunities for children to make choices and become independent in their learning in a variety of safe and stimulating environments. Outdoor learning plays a big part in our Early Years curriculum, with weekly Wild Tribe and additional outdoor learning opportunities on offer throughout children’s time with us. We create an exciting, stimulating curriculum, with a strong emphasis on the responsibility we all have to care for our fellow human beings, both near and far, and to be responsible custodians of the earth God created and trusts in us to look after.

Implementation

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, children can join our nursery in the term before they are 3. They can join our school, full time, at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

In our Early Years we consider each individual child’s unique learning journey, thinking carefully about their current stage of learning and development. This then enables us to provide a curriculum which is specific and tailored to meet the needs of the children. The basis of all of our planning is the individual child – **‘What is right for this child, at this time, in this place?’**

Our curriculum overview details the skills we may cover each term through both adult-led and child-directed teaching. By following the children’s emerging interests and themes, we are able to adapt teaching to meet children’s current next steps and teach specific skills, whilst also providing inspiring and engaging high quality learning experiences.

We have a separate nursery class and one reception class. The reception class benefits from two indoor spaces and one large outside area, and the nursery class benefits from one indoor area and one large

nursery garden, outdoor area. Both the nursery and reception classrooms and dedicated outdoor environments have a variety of open-ended, high quality, carefully devised provision which children can access independently. The children also regularly have access to our school's Wild Space and Secret Garden, for outdoor learning and nature investigation.

In our nursery and reception classrooms, you may see children playing alone or with their peers, deciding on resources and choosing how to spend their time. You may see a child playing and listening to an adult, who is modelling how to achieve something or teaching a new skill that interests the child. Adults may scaffold children's play. This involves taking their play to higher levels of learning, entering the play as a co-creator and helping to provoke a framework for the children to go from "what they know" to "what else they could know." Scaffolding enables a child to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which is just beyond his or her abilities. During play, where foundational social and emotional skills are developed, scaffolding is a bridge to new skill levels using three key ingredients; modelling the skill, giving clues and asking questions while the child is trying out a new skill, and then as the child approaches mastery, withdrawing the support. Throughout these interactions, adults model high-quality language through an oracy-focused approach, using commentary more than questioning, repeating and extending children's language using grammatically correct sentences, introducing and modelling ambitious vocabulary, and allowing sufficient pause time for children to process and share their thoughts.

Play

"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."

The Early Years statutory framework does not prescribe a particular teaching approach. The DfE (2021) state in the EYFS framework (p16) that *"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults."*

The Early Years staff at Bishop Bronescombe school are strong advocates for play and childhood. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise 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. At Bishop Bronescombe, we safeguard our children's right to play, and ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to play freely, following their own interests in a secure environment with effective support from caring adults. We use the classroom and our outdoor areas to enable children to access both planned, structured play activities, and self-initiated, spontaneous play activities.

Positive relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. In both our nursery and reception classes we adopt a key person system to best support each child throughout their time in our foundation stage.

Key Persons

At Bishop Bronescombe, we understand the importance of children feeling safe, stimulated and happy

within our setting and prioritise building positive relationships with every child to enable them to thrive in our class environments. We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs in a nurturing way. We also want parents to have confidence in both their child's wellbeing and role as active partners within our setting. When children start in our nursery, a member of staff is allocated to them to support their transition. This is to build an initial relationship and to have a dedicated person be a port of call for information sharing and handover. The key person is the family's initial, but not exclusive, point of contact (See our transition section below). Whilst in our setting, a child's key person may swap based on evolving relationships and who children choose as a trusted adult. This is then communicated with families. A key person is responsible for having a close relationship and supporting each child with their individual progress, next steps, and development through a non-judgemental approach. Whilst having a key adult is important for each child, our team will also support their key children to grow positive relationships with all practitioners and other children through modelling and gentle encouragement. This will enable children to continue to grow and thrive in the absence of their key adult.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

We recognise the importance of a child's relationships outside of school, therefore we work hard to promote a successful partnership with a two-way flow of knowledge, information, and expertise between school staff and families. We value the knowledge and understanding that you have of your child, and know that their learning extends beyond the school classroom.

In order to build these strong partnerships between school staff and families, we:

- Begin your child's journey into school with welcome phone calls and stay and play sessions to get to know you and your child.
- Give clear information about the school e.g. prospectus, newsletters, displays, meetings, workshops, etc.
- Use ClassDojo to communicate your child's learning journey, their next steps, and any information needed about upcoming events.
- Encourage parents to share information about their child in preparation for their focus week, and then organise a time to discuss their child's progress and next steps through two parent consultations throughout the year.

Safe Touch

At Bishop Bronescombe, we have a safe touch policy (available for referral within our school policies). In the EYFS we recognise that any physical contact should be with the intention of meeting the needs of the individual child. We define five different types of touch and physical contact, these are:

1. Casual / Informal / Incidental Touch

Staff use touch with pupils as part of a normal relationship, for example, comforting a child, giving reassurance and congratulating. This might include putting an arm out to bar an exit from a room, taking a child by the hand, patting on the back, or putting an arm around the shoulders. The benefit of this action is usually proactive, and can prevent a situation from escalating

2. General Reparative Touch

This is used by staff working with children who are having difficulties with their emotions. Healthy emotional development requires safe touch as a means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, angry, or sad child. Touch used to regulate a child's emotions triggers the release of the calming chemical oxytocin in the body. Reparative touch may include stroking a back, gently squeezing an arm, rocking gently, cuddling.

3. Contact Play

Contact play is used by staff adopting a role similar to a parent in a healthy child-parent relationship. This will only take place when the child has developed a trusting relationship with the adult and when they feel completely comfortable and at ease with this type of contact. Contact play may include an adult chasing and catching the child or an adult and child playing a game of building towers with their hands.

4. Interactive Play (Rough and Tumble Play)

This structured play follows clear rules and is operated under close supervision of staff. It will only ever take place when all participants are in agreement and completely understand the rules.

5. Positive Handling (Calming a Dysregulating Child)

There are children unable to control their actions or unable to appreciate danger, who have a right to be protected; as do other children using the provision. Staff have a duty of care to exercise age-appropriate calming techniques and restraints. 'PRICE' trained staff may restrain a child when behaviour is:

- Unacceptably threatening, dangerous, aggressive or out of control;
- In order to avoid harm to self or others or damage to property.

The restraining techniques used are familiar to the staff involved, and they are appropriately trained and be able to use them safely. During any incident of restraint, staff must seek as far as possible to lower the child's level of anxiety during the restraint by continually offering verbal reassurance, cause minimum level of restriction of movement of limbs consistent with the danger of injury (so, for example, will not restrict the movement of the child's legs when they are on the ground unless in an enclosed space where flailing legs are likely to be injured).

Evidencing

The EYFS Framework recognises the importance of genuine interactions between practitioners and children. The Framework states that practitioners should, *"draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement [when assessing children]... Recorded, written or photographic evidence is not required."*

At Bishop Bronescombe, we believe electronic and photographic devices should not become regular place in interactions between adults and children. We believe children deserve authentic, caring, and responsive relationships with our practitioners, and as such, practitioners endeavour to join children in their play without devices regularly in hands.

We recognise that photos and videos have a place when communicating to carers, and when sharing and reflecting on children's learning. We therefore share weekly, whole-class photo updates with our parents and carers through our Class Dojo pages, and create termly 'Learning Journey' videos. When children have their focus week, we also document parts of our observations through photographs and on our focus child forms, which are shared with parents/carers.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that an Early Years environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. EYFS requirements are being met by having an indoor and outdoor environment which children have free flow access to throughout the day during 'busy learning' time. Within these environments, there are specific resources available which target the development of the six areas of learning, such as writing equipment in many areas of the classroom. Resources available to the children within these areas are easily accessible and open ended, which allows children to take ownership over and direct their own learning.

Our Early Years environment is purposefully designed and organised to be an accessible learning landscape for all children. Resources are clearly labelled and organised in open baskets and containers so children can self-select items to engage with in their play. Areas are clearly identifiable and kept clutter-free to ensure

that spaces are calm and focused. Adults may enhance areas with provocations and adult-led activities throughout the year based on children's interests, next steps, and lines of inquiry.

Within our environment, we value the importance of offering lots of open ended resources to spark imagination and creativity, and develop our provision throughout the year as children's skills develop. Practitioners review the learning environment on a regular basis by evaluating the learning opportunities provided in each area and considering children's current interests, schematic play, and levels of learning development.

As well as the three Early Years classrooms and two outdoor areas, we have allocated hall slots and share the main playgrounds, field and other outside areas with the rest of the school. This included our school 'Wild Space', where we have weekly forest school mornings, and our school secret garden.

Resources

Our Indoor and Outdoor Classroom resources include the following:

- An inviting, homely reading area resourced with a wide range of picture and story books and puppets to encourage storytelling.
- A sensory tray with easily accessible water and sand equipment.
- Opportunities for writing in many areas both indoors and outdoors. This includes a variety of tools to promote mark making, creativity and early writing.
- A role play area with real life materials and open ended resources to encourage imaginative play.
- A variety of creative media and materials such as paint, loose parts, paper, glue and junk modelling materials.
- A realistic construction corner filled with a wide range of open ended resources that provides children with mathematical problem solving opportunities.
- A maths area with endless open ended counting, problem solving and investigation opportunities.
- Artefacts and interesting objects to explore and discuss.
- A planting area to allow children to grow and nurture their own plants.
- An outdoor reading den.
- An outdoor music and movement stage.
- Quiet areas to promote small world play outdoors.
- A mud and sand kitchen to encourage sensory play.
- Large, open-ended, outside construction materials and natural resources for building and physical development.

Weapon and superhero play

Most children enjoy engaging in imaginative play that relates to, and makes sense of, the world that they live in. For lots of children, this imaginative play contains a strong element of weapon and Super Hero re-enactment. Re-enacting weapon use is a universal language of play for children and usually results in high levels of engagement for the children actively involved in it. Images and ideas gleaned from the media are common starting points in children's (particularly boys) play and may involve characters with special powers or weapons. At Bishop Bronescombe, we believe that our role is to help children to understand and respect the rights of other children and to take responsibility for resources they use and the environment around them. We meet the children in their play and follow interests to open up curiosity and discussion. We recognise that this is a significant part of some children's development and although we don't openly encourage and model weapon play, if this is something presented by the children we use it as an opportunity to explore right and wrong.

A Unique Child

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. At Bishop Bronescombe, we recognise that every child is unique and that children develop in different ways at varying rates. We work hard to understand the every child's learning style and their characteristics of effective learning, to effectively support their specific next steps and developmental journey. We celebrate the learning process and encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Transitions

Nursery

Starting Nursery will be, for many children, the first time they have been away from their parents or familiar adults for a substantial length of time. It is therefore important we ensure transition from home to school is made as comfortable as possible.

In the first instance, we invite families to attend stay and play sessions at our setting, and organise a home visit. This enables the children and their parents/carers to meet the staff, familiarise themselves with our provision, experience some typical nursery activities, and enable our staff to meet the child in their familiar environment. These important meetings are a chance for both parents and the child to get to know our staff and vice versa, discuss the child's needs, and ask/answer any questions. A welcome pack is also given which includes information about our setting, policies and procedures.

We ask that all children have a familiar adult with them on their first day of nursery, and that an adult is available during their first session, should the child need longer to settle. Initial settling sessions are flexible due to children's unique needs. Staff will continuously review how each child is settling, and respond to their needs to ensure they feel safe and happy.

School

Prospective parents and children are invited to visit the school prior to admission during open afternoons. Many of our new admissions attend our nursery and these children are familiar with the school environment and teachers in the reception classes. Throughout the year, reception and nursery classes often mix together during provision time, which enables children joining from our nursery to familiarise themselves with the reception environment and build relationships with the class teachers.

Those joining us from additional settings will be contacted within two weeks of receiving their school place. Reception teachers will phone parents/carers to share any initial information about the family, their child and any current settings their children attend. Reception teachers will then organise a nursery visit to join the children in their current settings and talk to the children's key adults, as well as organising a home visit to meet the child in their familiar environment.

During the Summer Term before children are due to start school, families are invited to a welcome session/stay and play at our school, where there will be an opportunity to;

- receive an information pack
- informally meet the Head of School, class teachers, school SENDCo and PSA, support staff and other parents
- find out about school and class routines
- find out about school expectations
- talk about your child's learning and their learning journey through school
- find out about school uniform and school meals

In September, we offer a staggered start for all pupils, enabling them to transition positively into a full day at school. We have found this approach to be most beneficial for children, particularly when this transition and milestone can be quite daunting and challenging for some.

Key Stage One

At Bishop Bronescombe, we recognise that the transition from Early Years to Key Stage 1 is a crucial time for our children, and so we endeavour to get this right for each child and their unique learning journey. Children are given a number of opportunities to meet and get to know their Year 1 teachers. Parents are informed early on in the second half of the summer term as to whom their child's Year 1 teacher will be, and photographs of the staff are displayed and shared with the children. The Year 1 teacher visits our reception classes and vice versa, with SEND children having additional, regular visits to Year 1 classes at different times, e.g. break, story time, music, with familiar adult from reception accompanying them.

In Autumn term of Year 1, a mixture of the Early Years guidance and the National Curriculum are used to inform planning, depending on where each child is in their development. Our Year 1 classroom has areas of continuous provision to support and extend children's independence skills, with an additional outdoor area which reflects our Early Years provision. The areas of provision in Year One are planned for appropriate learning objectives with more challenge and teacher focussed tasks.

Curriculum

Our Early Years curriculum has been developed by our Early Years lead teachers, drawing inspiration from many Early Years experts and pedagogical approaches. At the heart of the curriculum is **The Unique Child**, and a recognition that each child is different, and will develop in different ways, at different paces, and at different times. Our curriculum has been designed to celebrate and utilise this, and focuses on nurturing and progressing each child's skillset where it is, and in a developmentally appropriate way. Our Early Years curriculum is flexible and gives practitioners the confidence and opportunity to adapt practice *in the moment* to respond to children's needs and interests in the best way possible, which in turn ensures the best outcomes for our children.