

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Ballifield Primary School



“PLAY BUILDS THE KIND
OF FREE-AND-EASY, TRY-IT-OUT,
DO-IT-YOURSELF CHARACTER
THAT OUR FUTURE NEEDS.”

James L. Hymes, Jr.



March 2026

Review date Sept 2026

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Context:

At Ballifield, we have a Nursery class (Foundation Stage 1) and two Reception classes (Foundation Stage 2) which operate in one unit.

Our Nursery (FS1) offers a full 30 hour provision for those eligible for the extended hours offer. For those parents allocated the standard 15 hours, these can be taken as full days rather than half days. Morning sessions start at 8:40am and end at 11:40am. The afternoon session starts at 12:20pm and ends at 3:20pm. The Nursery has one class teacher and two level 3 teaching assistants.

Our Reception (FS2) unit has 60 places, 30 in each class. Each class has a teacher and a teaching assistant. The school day starts at 8:40am and ends at 3:15pm.

The free flow nature of both our Nursery and Reception units, enable children to make choices about where they would like to play and explore both indoors and outdoors.

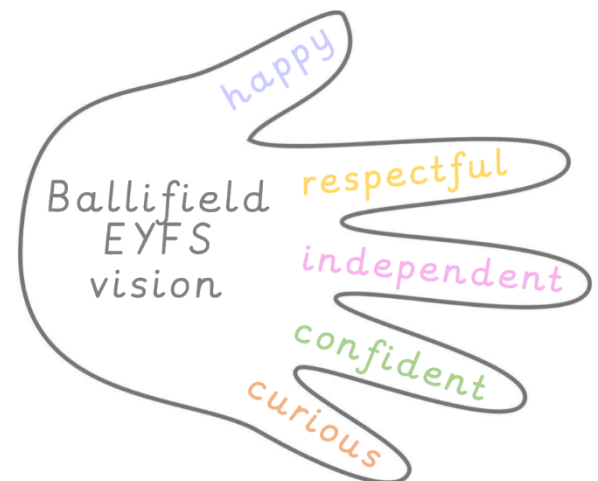
OUR INTENT FOR THE EYFS AT BALLIFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Purpose:

At Ballifield Primary School, it is our intent that all children are independent, curious and creative learners. Our curriculum is designed to build on all children's prior experiences and knowledge through themes that are familiar to them, so that they all make good progress. Language and vocabulary is at the heart of our curriculum and all learning opportunities, including adult-led and child-initiated activities, provide children with the chance to practise and extend this. We pride ourselves on establishing effective and supportive relationships with practitioners and parents, building on the rigorous transition process that we provide when children enter our school.

Our aim is for all children to:

- know how to appropriately express themselves and feel heard
- feel valued as an individual and be included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- develop their independence and be empowered to meet their own needs
- show a high level of engagement and active learning through a range of skill based activities
- enjoy their learning experience whilst achieving the Early Learning Goals



Aims:

At Ballifield we believe in being part of a “family of learning.” As a school we have a strong ethos of inspiring children to enjoy learning. We celebrate the rich diversity within our community and nurture children's individuality. We aim to **raise standards, improve outcomes and support each pupil's welfare, learning and developmental needs** in the EYFS by:

- Providing a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum, rooted in children's interests and experiences, and fully aligned with the statutory framework for the EYFS (2025).
- Recognising that all children are unique, with individual needs, learning styles and rates of development, and ensure provision is inclusive and responsive to these differences.
- Planning learning experiences that build on children's prior knowledge, personal interests and cultural capital.
- Ensuring that children have a breadth of opportunities to build on their foundational knowledge.
- Valuing play as a fundamental element of learning and development, enabling children to explore, practise and deepen understanding.
- Ensuring an effective balance of child-initiated play and carefully planned adult-directed learning, with a strong focus on developing children's language, communication and vocabulary.
- Providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment that promotes learning and development, both indoors and outdoors, underpinned by robust safeguarding practice.
- Promoting children's independence, resilience, decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Supporting children to develop a secure sense of identity and an understanding of their role within the school and wider community.
- Teaching children appropriate ways to express their needs, wishes and feelings, supporting emotional literacy and self-regulation.

- Developing children's social skills and understanding of positive behaviour, including respect for others and the environment.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to strengthen children's executive function skills, such as attention, working memory and cognitive flexibility.
- Working in close partnership with parents and carers to support children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Ensuring pupils, parents and staff feel valued, respected and included as part of a positive and inclusive school community.

OUR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EYFS AT BALLIFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Legal Requirements (according to legislation in England):

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [Statutory Early Years Framework \(September 2025\)](#). This framework specifies the standards and requirements for learning, development and care in the Early Years and provides prime and specific areas of learning that we use to shape our curriculum.

Staff in the EYFS:

Our EYFS team consists of experienced teachers and teaching assistants who are skilled in early years teaching and pedagogy. They understand the needs of our youngest children and how best to create and provide the EYFS curriculum. Staff undertake regular CPD to ensure that practice moves forwards to best support our children.

The EYFS Curriculum at Ballifield:

Staff follow the educational programmes as outlined in the 2025 statutory framework of the EYFS, which has been used, alongside the Development Matters, to develop our own curriculum.

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 building a foundation to ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, form relationships and thrive.

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

The EYFS curriculum at Ballifield is designed to recognise children's prior learning from previous settings and their experiences at home, provide first hand learning experiences, whilst allowing the children to build resilience, ambition and integrity.

Staff ensure that the EYFS curriculum supports the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning to ensure a deep level of learning takes place. These are:

- 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



Learning and Development:

“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 and learning that is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children’s interests, responding to each child’s emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning. As children grow older and move into the reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for Key Stage 1.” (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2025)

We ensure that this approach:

- Is at the heart of our learning journey and underpins all curriculum planning.
- Is distinctive, ambitious and strategically planned to meet the needs of all children including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Is regularly reviewed in light of national developments, current research and emerging best practice.
- Introduces children to challenging, engaging and real-life problems that deepen learning.
- Actively promotes curiosity, engagement and a love of learning.
- Is delivered through a child-centred approach, while ensuring adults guide learning purposefully.
- Allows children time to consolidate, practise and embed skills and knowledge.
- Ensures high-quality resources and equipment are available to support learning across all areas of the EYFS and at every stage of development.
- Treats all areas of learning as equally important and carefully interlinked.
- Embeds fundamental British values, supporting children to develop a sense of self, belonging and respect for others.
- Enables children to learn to live together peacefully and understand their role within a diverse, multi-cultural society.

Planning and Assessment:

At Ballifield, ongoing assessment is central to learning and development. Staff observe children to identify their engagement, achievement and interests, and hold regular discussions to ensure all children are supported and challenged appropriately. Observations, including those shared by parents and carers, inform future planning. Evidence is captured via the online journal Tapestry (see our Tapestry Online Learning Journey policy).

Staff scaffold and extend learning during play and focused activities, providing opportunities for sustained shared thinking and high-quality discussions. Misconceptions and gaps in learning are identified promptly, through adapted provision, tailored learning activities and targeted interventions.

Every child is recognised as unique, and planning is flexible to reflect individual interests, needs and stages of development. For children with SEND, staff liaise with the SENDCo and external agencies to secure specialist support when required.

At the end of EYFS, children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development (‘expected’), or
- Not yet reaching expected levels (‘emerging’).

The Enabling Environment:

Ballifield recognises that the learning environment plays an important role in supporting and extending pupils’ learning and development in the EYFS. Staff create an exciting and stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors, for children to learn in, which reflects our ambitious EYFS curriculum.

Staff in the EYFS understand the importance of creating a **language rich environment** with communication friendly spaces for our children. Staff use every opportunity to use language, to interact, to share a focus, to talk, to take turns and also to build a nurturing environment.

All staff members are responsible for ensuring that the emotional environment is warm and accepting of everyone. In order to create an environment in which pupils feel happy and confident to try new things, staff members will empathise with pupils, support their emotions and ensure that they feel valued.

The Zones of Regulation are used to support children to recognise and express their emotions; staff check in with children throughout the day and support children by co-regulating to bring them back to the green zone.

Continuous provision is carefully planned to build children's foundational knowledge progressively across each term. Enhancements and additional resources are used purposefully to respond to children's interests, needs and developing skills. Children have consistent access to well-organised indoor and outdoor environments, structured into discrete areas of learning, enabling them to practise, revisit and extend learning. Staff engage in play to model, support and deepen learning. Displays celebrate children's achievements and successes, promoting confidence and self-esteem, while interactive learning walls, such as phonics, support children's independent learning.

Visits and Visitors:

At Ballifield we understand the importance of visits and visitors to our pupils. In the EYFS, we aim to invite visitors in to school to enhance the planned themes and give the children opportunities to extend their vocabulary and experiences. Educational visits will be arranged in order to further expand pupils' learning experiences. Prior to a trip, a risk assessment of the space is carried out and it is ensured that the area is appropriate for the activity and pupils involved.

Inclusion:

Inclusion is embedded in practice, with all children assessed on entry to F1 and F2 to identify SEND quickly and support disadvantaged pupils well. Teachers are aware that pupils may have barriers to learning in some areas and may need additional support; Targeted interventions are implemented quickly, e.g. executive function skills, pre-teaching, Bucket Time, and speaking and listening. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, are encouraged to progress to their full potential and a variety of teaching methods are employed to ensure that this is possible.

Transition:

At Ballifield, we carefully plan transitions to ensure that all children have the best possible start in Nursery and Reception. Planning begins well in advance of each child's start date, and we have strong links with feeder nurseries whilst establishing relationships with new pre-school settings.

To support smooth transitions, we:

- Value parents as their child's first educators.
- Contact every feeder nursery/pre-school to gather essential information.
- Visit children in their familiar settings whenever possible.
- Share key information during new parent welcome meetings.
- Use written information from pre-schools to inform early planning.
- Invite Reception children for summer transition visits and Nursery children for stay-and-play sessions.
- Hold transition meetings and provide additional documentation for children with additional needs.
- Offer one-to-one meetings for parents and children with class teachers to discuss home and school information.
- Stagger entry for Reception and Nursery children to support a smooth start.
- Plan individualised starts for children who require extra support, in consultation with parents and external agencies.

Transitions into Key Stage 1 are also carefully managed. Children visit their new classrooms, meet Year 1 teachers, and experience familiar routines and expectations. Parents are offered opportunities to meet new teachers and explore their child's next learning environment.

Working with Parents/Carers:

We recognise that children learn and develop best when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers. At Ballifield, these partnerships are central to the effectiveness of our EYFS.

Parents/carers are kept up to date with their child's progress through the EYFS profile, reports, consultations, and the Tapestry online learning journal, providing a clear picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

We provide regular opportunities for parents/carers to engage with their child's learning, celebrate successes and understand our curriculum. This includes stay-and-play sessions, parent workshops, active modelling of reading, phonics and mathematics, and bespoke sessions to show how to support learning at home.

Each child is assigned a key person—typically their class teacher—who ensures learning and care are tailored to the child's needs. The key person supports parents/carers in guiding their child's development at home and helps families access specialist support when appropriate.

Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures:

Safeguarding is prioritised from the outset, with strong, trusting relationships with children and families supporting effective transitions into EYFS. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children by providing a safe, nurturing environment as we recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. It is important to us that all children in school feel happy, safe and secure.

We aim to develop the children's understanding and the need for boundaries and rules and actively involve them in discussions around these. We help them to understand why they exist and support them to develop a positive sense of self. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

At Ballifield, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025.

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Child Protection (safeguarding) policy.

Safer Eating Paediatric First Aid & Mealtimes:

At Ballifield, we prioritise children's health, safety and well-being during mealtimes by promoting safer eating practices and maintaining a calm, supportive environment. All EYFS Teaching Assistants are trained in paediatric first aid and are present during snack and meal times. All staff remain vigilant whilst children are eating, ensuring appropriate supervision at all times to reduce the risk of choking. Children are encouraged to sit properly, chew food thoroughly and develop independence with eating, whilst staff model good habits and provide age-appropriate support.

Food is prepared and served in line with current safety guidance, with consideration given to allergies, dietary needs and suitable portion sizes. As a school we follow the statutory [EYFS nutrition guidance 2025](#) and [food safety guidelines](#). All EYFS staff undertake food hygiene training every 2 years.

Mealtimes are valued as social learning opportunities where children can develop communication skills, confidence and positive attitudes towards healthy eating.

THE IMPACT OF THE EYFS AT BALLIFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Assessment, reporting and monitoring:

An integral part of our EYFS curriculum is preparing children for the future. At Ballifield, every child is valued as a unique individual, and our curriculum is designed to allow all children to excel based on their strengths, interests and values. From their different starting points, children make strong progress academically, socially, emotionally, physically and creatively, building secure knowledge, skills and understanding that prepare them for Year 1 and beyond.

Children are supported to:

- Develop strong communication skills and listen respectfully to others.
- Take pride in their learning and strive to do their best.
- Build emotional resilience and perseverance when facing challenges.
- Develop self-awareness and confidence in their abilities.
- Demonstrate kindness, respect, honesty and inclusive attitudes, understanding their role in wider society.

The impact of the curriculum is monitored through ongoing and summative assessment. Children's progress is tracked against Reception Development Matters using our online tracker (EAMAG), including for vulnerable groups such as SEND, disadvantaged, and summer-born children. Interventions are implemented as needed, and assessment judgements are moderated internally and with local schools.

The quality of teaching is continually monitored, with any concerns addressed by the EYFS Lead. This policy is reviewed annually by the EYFS Lead, Head of School, and governing body, or following changes to statutory EYFS guidance. All staff are required to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the policy, and any updates are communicated to staff and parents, who may request a copy from the school office.

Appendix 1: List of Statutory Policies and Procedures for EYFS

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according to the EYFS statutory framework.

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
Phonics and Early Reading	See phonics policy
Tapestry Learning journey	See Tapestry Learning Journey policy