The Beacon CE Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Handbook

(Updated September 2026)

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Our Christian Vision is:

Learning Together, Following Jesus

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life."

John 8:12

Our Early Years curriculum aims to

- Support our children to develop strong communication, language and literacy skills
- Encourage our children to be creative, imaginative, resilient, independent and resourceful learners.
- Empower our children to understand, celebrate and respect different cultures and diversity
- Give our children the courage and desire to be positive role models to their peers

At The Beacon CE Primary School, our Early Years provision consists of a 2 – 3 Room, Nursery and Reception Class. We are committed to providing a high-quality Early Years education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers the development of children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. This handbook is to support consistency in terms of the Learning and Teaching of the EYFS in our Foundation Stage.

Intent

- We have high ambitions for all children and provide a curriculum that meets the needs of each child, so all children from every background will do well and no child gets left behind
- At the Beacon, we focus on the development of every child as an individual, valuing and building on their previous experiences and responding to their individual needs
- The curriculum is well planned and well sequenced, building on from what children can do and they already know, so they can acquire new skills and knowledge

- *At the Beacon, we aim to provide a happy, caring, secure and stimulating learning environment to support and extend children's development and learning*
- *Foster good relationships with families, where they feel valued and are able to actively contribute to and participate in school life*
- *Encourage confidence, independence and a desire to learn.*
- *Promote and celebrate achievement across all areas of the EYFS curriculum ensuring every child is included and supported*

Implementation

We follow the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings. At The Beacon CE Primary we recognise that;

- *Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, confident and self- assured*
- *Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships*
- *Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers*
- *Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates*

Children learn skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through the seven areas of learning and development.

Children should mostly develop the three prime areas first. These are:

- *Communication and Language*
- *Physical Development*
- *Personal, Social and Emotional Development.*

These prime areas are those most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning.

As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in four specific areas. These are:

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

Communication and Language

This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundations for literacy skills. Children's developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, saying rhymes and singing songs together.

We aim to provide meaningful contexts for communication and language in EYFS, following the URLEY Approach that supports and develops children's oral language and communication skills and encourage them to be resilient and independent learners. We use the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3) to develop enabling environments in our indoor and outdoor provision with high-quality communication & language interactions, encouraging sustained shared thinking.

Children are highly encouraged and motivated to take part in creating their own fantastic stories using Tales Toolkit, their imagination and talking about the characters, setting, problem and solution of their stories. We encourage children to respect and celebrate diversity and support them in developing rich communication and language skills by understanding other cultures and beliefs through first hand experiences, books, celebrating festivals.

Physical Development

Children are given the opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills developing their confidence and skill. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what they need to do to keep themselves healthy. Children also develop spatial awareness and coordination, whilst at the same time encouraging the fine motor skills that they will need to develop holistically. This is done both indoors and outdoors. We use the Movement and Storytelling Programme to enhance gross motor skills in a way which adds activities requiring the development of key communication skills such as facial expressions, body language, emotion and vocabulary

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are encouraged to learn to work together, share, take turns and co-operate with others. Using stories, circle times and through conversation, children are supported with recognising, naming and regulating their emotions.

Children are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. Staff support children to develop the characteristics of effective learning, so children become resilient and persevere when they encounter challenges.

Children are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become more confident and develop a positive self-image.

Literacy

We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect. The children will experience a wide range of stories, books (fiction and nonfiction), rhymes and poetry. They are encouraged to use the mark-making equipment in all the different areas of the learning environments independently and take part in teacher-led activities. These activities include whole class shared reading and writing, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing activities.

Across Early Years, we use high-quality texts that are engaging vocabulary-rich that support a wide range of reading and writing opportunities. These high-quality texts, also have strong thematic links to the other areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Phonics

At The Beacon CE Primary we aim to:

- *To ensure the delivery of phonics is of high quality and is systematic*
- *To ensure there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics in a discrete session*
- *To give all children the most enriching phonics sessions allowing them to apply their phonic knowledge to both reading and writing*
- *To have opportunities to apply the skills they have learned throughout the day and in a rich learning environment*
- *To differentiate the teaching of phonics to enable outstanding progress to be made by all children.*

We follow the 'RWI Phonics' programme and the order in which the sounds are taught for Reception Class.

In our 2 – 3 Room and Nursery, children are exposed to communication and language games. The children have opportunities to work in small groups and activities are embedded into the continuous provision to support children's learning and development.

In Nursery, children are also continually exposed to communication and language games and the RWI letter cards and rhymes.

In Reception, children are taught phonics using RWI scheme of work and work through Sets 1, 2 and 3. All children in Reception are split into ability groups for phonic sessions.

Mathematics

All children are supported to develop their mathematical skills and language through mathematically rich learning environments, real life contexts, rhyme and stories. Children are provided with meaningful contexts for mathematics in EYFS, following long term plans and children's interests.

In 2-3 Nursery we aim to enhance children's experience and knowledge of maths in the world around them through high-quality interactions during play. Children are also exposed to mathematical concepts through rhyme and stories.

In 3-4 Nursery children are introduced to the 'Number of the Week' concept as part of a Mastery approach, alongside the use of rhyme and stories.

In Reception class, we use the NCETM Mastering Number Programme to build firm mathematical foundations and develop children's calculation and counting fluency. Through the programme, children develop strong number sense, their subitising and automaticity skills, their mathematical oracy and readiness for Key Stage 1.

Understanding the World

We provide opportunities for children to explore and learn about the world they live in. Children are encouraged to observe, solve problems, question, make decisions, experiment, predict, and plan in a variety of contexts. By facilitating different opportunities, we wish our children to find out about their environment. It helps to develop their senses, understanding and awe of their physical world. They learn about significant figures from the past, begin to discuss chronology, develop their understanding of their own and contrasting environments and where these sit in the world. We also make sure our children receive a range of 'first-hand' experiences to support their learning. Children will also explore the uses and impact of Information and communication technology on their everyday lives.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children will explore expressive arts and design across three strands: natural materials recreated, creative design and imaginative role play. Children will explore these areas of the curriculum by using a range of materials, tools and techniques using their imagination and creativity, and by experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. Opportunities to do this are provided through art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design, in which children represent their unique thoughts, ideas and feelings.

In Harmony

We work very closely with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall and twice a week, the children have musicianship lessons. During these sessions, the children have opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, knowledge of rhythm, rhyme and pitch.

Impact

We strive to ensure that our children's progress during their time in EYFS is the best it can be. We want all children to become competent lifelong learners, regardless of their backgrounds and starting points and develop good communication and language skills. All children in our EYFS experience smooth transitions, whether they join us in 2-3 Room, Nursery, Reception and beyond.

We regularly assess children's progress throughout the year (See EYFS Assessment Handbook). Staff use observations to make formative assessments, which quickly inform planning and next steps for children in their learning. We also use Development Matters as a guide to support our summative assessments of children and we use this information to put into place action plans to support all children's learning.

The impact of our curriculum is also measured by how effectively it supports our children to develop into well rounded individuals.

Planning

To support children's learning we follow our Beacon Knowledge and Skills curriculum, Long-Term plans and the children's interests. We also use 'In the moment planning' to ensure that we are focusing on children's next stages of learning and enhancing the provision to support their learning needs and interests. When planning, practitioners reflect on the Three Characteristics of Effective 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*

The Learning Environment

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The environment is set up in learning areas, where children are easily able to find clearly labelled equipment and resources they need. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Activities are planned for both inside and outside with children having the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classrooms throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas, including designated areas for writing, mathematics, art and craft, role play, physical activity, construction, small world and play dough area as well as book corner, sand and water. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage has separate and secure outdoor areas for our 2 – 3 Room, Nursery and Reception Classes. Being outdoors offers opportunities for children to do things in different ways and on different scales. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active

Inclusion

We believe that all children are entitled to an education which meets their individual needs and inclusivity underpins our practices. We believe that all children are entitled to a curriculum which focuses on quality first teaching and which is differentiated to meet the individual needs of all children. (Please see Inclusion and SEND Policy)

Children's Welfare

At The Beacon CE Primary, our Safeguarding statement is:

'Our school is committed to safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare and expects all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment. Everyone has a responsibility to act without delay to protect children by reporting anything that might suggest a child is being abused or neglected. It is our willingness to work safely and challenge inappropriate behaviours that underpins this commitment. The school seeks to work in partnership with families and other agencies to improve the outcomes for children who are vulnerable or in need.'

'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.' (KCSIE, 2026)

(Please see Child Protection Policy)

Parents as Partners

We appreciate that parents are children's first educators and we value the contribution they make.

We understand the role that parents have played and their future role in educating their child. We do this through:

- *Providing all families with a Home Visit so we can talk to parents about their child before their child starts our school.*
- *We provide all children with a series of visits to our school, so children have the opportunity to spend time with their peers and adults before starting school.*
- *Inviting all families to parent's evenings to talk about their child's progress.*
- *Providing parents with log in codes so they can view their child's Learning Journey at home and upload observations about their child onto their child's Learning Journey.*
- *We arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Stay and Plays, and workshops.*
- *We offer our parents and carers the chance to take part in The Nurturing Programme which aims to help adults understand and manage feelings and behaviour and become more positive and nurturing in their relationships with children and each other.*

Key Person

We have always been proud that children develop special relationships with all members of staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage. At The Beacon CE Primary we allocate each child a key person. The child's key person ensures that the child's needs and interests are planned for. They respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviours and ensure that they feel safe and cared for. All members of staff who work with the children, contribute to records of the child's development, but the child's 'Key Person' keeps a particularly close eye on them.

EYFS Welfare Requirements

Since September 2026, the Early Years Foundation Stage safeguarding requirements have been strengthened.

***Child Absence** – We follow up on all absences promptly. We hold 3 contact numbers and have a written attendance policy.*

***Paediatric First Aid** – all staff in Early Years and additional staff who work in school, have an up to date and relevant Paediatric First Aid certificate.*

***Safer Eating** – Before any child is admitted to our school, we will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has and any special health requirements. This information will be communicated to all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food. Additionally, a designated staff member will be clearly assigned during every meal and snack time to verify that all food and beverages served strictly adhere to each child's individual dietary and health requirements.*

All staff in our school have up to date training on Allergies and Anaphylaxis. Please refer to our policy, LDST Allergy and Anaphylaxis.

***Safer Sleep** - If children fall asleep during their time in our care, we will follow the following guidance.*

- *Children will be placed down on their back, on a firm flat waterproof mattress on the floor. Lightweight bedding will be firmly tucked in around the child, below their shoulders to prevent head covering.*
- *Where blankets are used, the child will be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with blankets tucked in.*
- *Extra items such as toys, pillows and extra blankets will not be placed with the child.*
- *The room temperature will be regularly checked. The recommended room temperature for babies is 16 – 20°C.*
- *Children's heads will not be covered.*
- *Children will always be within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping.*

All EYFS staff, our Headteacher, Senior Leaders and Admin team have up to date training on Safe Sleep and SIDs.

***Whistleblowing** – all staff attend annual safeguarding training and have regular updates throughout the year. Staff know the procedures if they need to escalate concerns internally or externally to bodies like OFSTED or the local authority designated officer.*

***Children's Privacy** – consideration is given to this and balanced with safeguarding when changing nappies and supporting children with toileting.*

***Safer Recruitment** – all staff references are rigorously checked and only suitable individuals are recruited to work with the children.*

For full details, please refer to EYFS Statutory Framework 2026

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf