Banister Primary School

Belief • Pride • Success

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Approved by:	Full Governing Board
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Contents

1. Aims 4

2. Legislation 4

3.Giving Children the Best Start in Life 5

3.1 Early language and communication 5

3.2 Strong relationships and attachment 5

3.3 Working in partnership with parents and carers 5

3.4 Early identification and inclusion 5

3.5 Health, wellbeing and development 6

3.6 Continuity and smooth transitions 6

3.7 Equity and high expectations 6

4. Curriculum 6

5. Teaching and Learning 8

6. Assessment 9

7. Working with Parents and Carers 10

8. Staff 10

9. Safeguarding and Welfare 11

9.1 Safeguarding culture and responsibilities 11

10. Key person and relationships 11

11. Supervision and staffing 11

12. Use of mobile phones and cameras 11

13. Health, safety and risk assessment 12

14. Paediatric First Aid (PFA) 12

15. Safer eating 12

16. Attendance and absence 12

17. Toileting and privacy 13

18. Intimate care and toileting 13

19. Oral health and wellbeing 13

20. Online safety 13

21. Continuous review..... 13

1. Aims

At Banister Primary School, we are committed to providing the highest quality Early Years education where every child feels safe, happy, and valued.

- Accesses a broad, balanced, and engaging curriculum that promotes curiosity and independence.
- Makes good progress through high-quality teaching, care, and consistency.
- Develops strong relationships through partnership with parents and carers.
- Is included, respected, and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), effective from 1 September 2025, including statutory requirements for:

- Welfare and safeguarding
- Health and safety
- Staff qualifications, ratios, and training

It works alongside other school policies, including:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest version)

Equality Act 2010 (including reasonable adjustments)

SEND Code of Practice 2015

Data protection (UK GDPR / Data Protection Act)

DFE Best start for life

DfE Guidance on Children's Screen Use in Early Years Settings

Safeguarding children Policy

Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

Health and Safety Policy

3.Giving Children the Best Start in Life

In line with the Department for Education's *Best Start for Life* priorities, we are committed to ensuring that every child in our Early Years provision receives the strongest possible start to their education, health and wellbeing.

We recognise that early childhood is a critical period for development, and that high-quality early education has a significant impact on children's long-term outcomes.

3.1 Early language and communication

We prioritise the development of children's **communication and language** as the foundation for all learning. Staff provide:

- rich, high-quality interactions
- explicit modelling of language and vocabulary
- opportunities for sustained talk, storytelling and conversation

We identify and support children with delayed language development early, working with families and professionals where necessary.

3.2 Strong relationships and attachment

We ensure that children develop **secure attachments and positive relationships** with familiar adults through the key person system. These relationships:

- support children's emotional security and wellbeing
- enable staff to respond sensitively to individual needs
- provide the foundation for learning and development

3.3 Working in partnership with parents and carers

We recognise parents and carers as children's first educators. We work in close partnership to:

- share information about children's development and wellbeing
- support home learning, particularly around language, reading and routines
- provide guidance and support where needed

We actively seek and value parental voice and engagement.

3.4 Early identification and inclusion

We are committed to identifying and addressing **barriers to learning as early as possible**, particularly for:

- disadvantaged children

- children with SEND
- children known to social care or facing other vulnerabilities

We use assessment and professional knowledge to provide **timely, targeted support**, ensuring all children can access a broad and ambitious curriculum.

3.5 Health, wellbeing and development

We promote children's **physical health, emotional wellbeing and development** through:

- safe, nurturing environments
- opportunities for active play and physical development
- support for healthy routines, including eating, hygiene and oral health

We work with health professionals and external agencies where appropriate to support children and families.

3.6 Continuity and smooth transitions

We recognise the importance of continuity in children's early experiences. We:

- support smooth transitions into EYFS through effective induction
- share information with Year 1 to ensure continuity of learning
- work collaboratively with other settings where children attend more than one provision

3.7 Equity and high expectations

We have **high expectations for all children**, regardless of background. Our provision is designed to:

- reduce inequalities
- provide equitable opportunities for success
- ensure all children are well prepared for the next stage of education

4. Curriculum

Our EYFS curriculum is ambitious, coherently planned and sequenced to ensure that all children, regardless of starting point, develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for future learning and success.

The curriculum is designed in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework and is organised across the seven areas of learning. It clearly identifies the **foundational knowledge and skills** children need, particularly in **communication and language,**

early reading, writing and mathematics, so that they can successfully access the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

We place a strong emphasis on developing children's **communication and language**, recognising this as the foundation for learning across all areas. Through high-quality interactions, modelling, storytelling, and structured talk, staff support children to develop vocabulary, articulate ideas and build understanding.

The curriculum is **sequenced progressively**, enabling children to build knowledge and skills over time. Staff carefully plan learning experiences that revisit and deepen understanding, ensuring that children know more, remember more and can do more as they move through the EYFS.

Teaching is informed by accurate assessment of children's **starting points**, interests and needs. Staff use ongoing formative assessment to adapt the curriculum, provide additional support where needed, and ensure that all children, including those who are disadvantaged, have SEND or face other barriers, can access a broad and balanced curriculum.

Our curriculum is delivered through a balance of **adult-led and child-initiated learning**, where high-quality interactions are central. Practitioners model, question, explain and extend learning, ensuring that teaching is purposeful and focused on the most important knowledge and concepts.

We ensure that all children develop the **characteristics of effective learning**—playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically—which underpin successful lifelong learning.

Through our curriculum, children develop the **foundations for reading**, including daily exposure to high-quality texts, systematic synthetic phonics teaching, and opportunities to develop a love of reading.

The learning environment, routines and experiences are designed to support **secure foundations for learning**, promote independence, and enable children to practise and apply their knowledge across all areas of learning.

Prime Areas:
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas:
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Where a child may have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND), we work closely with parents, our SENDCo, and external agencies as required.

5. Teaching and Learning

Teaching in the EYFS is rooted in a clear understanding of how young children learn and is focused on ensuring that all children develop the **foundational knowledge and skills** they need for future success.

Practitioners deliver the curriculum through a balance of **adult-led and child-initiated learning**, underpinned by purposeful play and high-quality interactions. Teaching includes modelling, explaining, demonstrating, questioning, and providing opportunities for children to practise and apply their learning across all areas of the curriculum.

A strong emphasis is placed on **high-quality adult–child interactions**. Staff actively engage with children to:

- extend vocabulary and language development
- scaffold thinking and deepen understanding
- support children to articulate their ideas and knowledge

These interactions are carefully planned and responsive, enabling children to build knowledge over time and make connections across their learning.

Teaching prioritises the development of **communication and language**, recognizing its importance as the foundation for learning. Staff model language, introduce and reinforce new vocabulary, and provide rich opportunities for children to speak, listen and respond in a range of contexts.

The teaching of early reading is systematic and rigorous. Children are taught using a **systematic synthetic phonics programme**, supported by daily story time where high-quality texts are read, re-read and discussed to build familiarity, comprehension and a love of reading.

Mathematics teaching is carefully sequenced to develop children's understanding of number, numerical patterns and spatial reasoning. Staff use precise mathematical language and provide opportunities for children to practise counting, calculating and reasoning in meaningful contexts.

Practitioners ensure that teaching is **well sequenced and builds on children's prior knowledge**, so that learning is cumulative and progressive. Staff identify the most important knowledge and concepts and focus teaching on securing these, checking understanding regularly and adapting their approach where necessary.

Assessment is used effectively during teaching to identify gaps in children's knowledge and to provide additional modelling, explanation and practice where needed. Staff ensure that children have the knowledge required to access activities successfully and provide extra support for those who need it.

The learning environment, routines and daily experiences are carefully designed to support learning. This includes:

- well-organised, stimulating indoor and outdoor provision
- clear routines that promote independence and engagement
- opportunities for sustained shared thinking and exploration

Children develop the **characteristics of effective learning**—playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically—through carefully planned opportunities that promote curiosity, resilience and problem-solving.

Teaching is inclusive and responsive. Staff have high expectations for all children and adapt their practice to meet individual needs, ensuring that children who are disadvantaged, have SEND, or face other barriers to learning are fully supported to access the curriculum and make progress.

Through consistent, high-quality teaching, children develop secure foundations in communication, early reading, writing and mathematics, enabling them to be well prepared for the next stage of their education.

6. Assessment

Assessment in the EYFS is **ongoing, formative and integral to teaching and learning**. Practitioners use skilled observation, interaction and questioning to understand what children know, understand and can do.

Assessment is used purposefully to:

- identify children's **starting points**
- inform **curriculum planning and adaptation**
- ensure that children build knowledge and skills progressively over time

Staff use assessment to **identify gaps in learning early** and provide timely support, ensuring children are supported to **keep up rather than catch up**.

We do not use excessive data collection or tracking systems. Assessment is **low-burden and focused on supporting learning**, in line with statutory guidance.

Within the first six weeks of Reception, children complete the **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)**. Throughout the year, practitioners use formative assessment to adapt teaching and ensure all children, including those with SEND and those who face barriers to learning, access the full curriculum.

At the end of Reception, practitioners complete the **EYFS Profile**, assessing children against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). These judgements are based on professional knowledge of the child and reflect their attainment across the full curriculum.

Assessment information is shared effectively with:

- parents and carers
- the Year 1 team

to ensure continuity and a strong transition into Key Stage 1.

Moderation takes place within school and with external partners to ensure assessments are accurate and consistent.

7. Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise parents and carers as children's first educators. We foster strong home–school partnerships through:

• Induction meetings
• Regular communication and learning updates
• Termly consultations and end-of-year reports

Together, we support each child's learning, wellbeing, and development.

8. Staff

All EYFS staff receive safeguarding training in line with the EYFS safeguarding training requirements and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), with regular updates and refreshers to ensure knowledge remains current. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) provides advice and guidance, liaises with the Local Authority and safeguarding partners, and ensures procedures are followed in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

We follow safer recruitment procedures and a culture of openness and accountability in line with the Whistleblowing Policy. References are obtained and reviewed before employment commences, in line with EYFS safer recruitment requirements.

9. Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is a fundamental priority in our EYFS provision. We are committed to establishing and maintaining an **open, positive safeguarding culture** where children's welfare is paramount and all staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We recognise that safeguarding issues can arise in any setting and at any time, and staff maintain a vigilant attitude of **"it could happen here."** Systems, policies and procedures are designed to ensure that children are protected from harm and that concerns are identified and responded to promptly and effectively.

9.1 Safeguarding culture and responsibilities

All staff:

- are trained regularly in safeguarding and child protection, including induction and updates in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- understand the signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns
- know how to report concerns and act promptly using agreed procedures

Leaders ensure that safeguarding policies are clearly understood and consistently implemented, and that staff are confident to raise concerns or challenge practice where necessary.

We work effectively with external agencies and safeguarding partners to ensure that children and families receive the support they need, in line with statutory guidance.

10. Key person and relationships

Each child is assigned a **key person** who supports their wellbeing, development and sense of security. Strong, trusting relationships enable staff to recognise changes in behaviour or presentation that may indicate a safeguarding concern.

11. Supervision and staffing

Children are **appropriately supervised at all times**, remaining within sight and hearing of staff. Staffing ratios meet statutory requirements and staff are deployed effectively. This ensures children's safety and wellbeing, enables staff to meet the needs of all children effectively, and complies with infant class size legislation, including the requirement for at least one qualified teacher per 30 pupils.

All staff undergo safer recruitment checks, and a **single central record** is maintained in line with statutory guidance.

12. Use of mobile phones and cameras

Staff do not use personal mobile phones or devices in areas where children are present. Any devices used for recording are school-owned and used in line with safeguarding procedures.

13. Health, safety and risk assessment

The learning environment is safe, secure and regularly reviewed. Daily checks and risk assessments ensure that both indoor and outdoor areas are suitable and hazards are minimised.

Clear routines and expectations support children's safety, independence and well-being.

14. Paediatric First Aid (PFA)

At least one member of staff with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate is present at all times. All accidents and incidents are recorded and reported to parents on the same day or at the earliest opportunity. Paediatric First Aid certificates are renewed every three years in accordance with statutory requirements.

15. Safer eating

Children are supervised appropriately while eating and are seated safely. Staff are trained in food safety and allergy awareness, including recognising symptoms of anaphylaxis.

Individual dietary and medical needs are carefully managed in partnership with parents, the school's food providers and, where appropriate, health professionals. Staff maintain ongoing discussions with parents regarding children's dietary needs and developmental readiness for different foods where appropriate.

Before a child joins our setting, we obtain information about their:

- Dietary requirements and preferences
- Food allergies and intolerances
- Health requirements

We will consult with parents/carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for their child – with the help of health professionals, where appropriate
    - We will also keep this information up to date and share it with all staff

We will prepare food in a way that:

- Is in line with the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance

Medical needs, and dietary requirements are managed carefully, following the EYFS food safety guidance and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

16. Attendance and absence

We follow up all absences promptly to ensure children are safe. Where a child is absent for a prolonged period or without notification, we will contact parents and emergency contacts in line with our attendance and safeguarding procedures. Where children are absent without explanation, we contact parents and emergency contacts and follow safeguarding procedures

where required. We monitor patterns of absence and take appropriate action where concerns arise regarding a child's welfare or access to education. We recognise that **children missing education may be at risk of harm**, and concerns are escalated in line with safeguarding procedures.

17. Toileting and privacy

Children are supported with dignity when toileting or during intimate care, following safeguarding best practice.

When children need support with toileting or in rare cases of nappies needing changing, we will balance children's privacy with their safeguarding and support needs. If children are still wearing nappies and in need of support an intimate care plan will be written with the parents / guardians.

Our learning environment is risk assessed, safe, and stimulating. Health, safety, and hygiene procedures follow the Health and Safety Policy.

18. Intimate care and toileting

Children are supported with dignity, privacy and respect. Intimate care is carried out in line with safeguarding procedures, and individual care plans are agreed with parents where needed.

19. Oral health and wellbeing

We promote children's physical health and wellbeing, including oral health, healthy eating and active lifestyles, through daily routines and learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to develop positive oral health habits and families are signposted to relevant oral health information and services.

20. Online safety

Children are supported, in an age-appropriate way, to understand how to stay safe when using technology. Digital technology is used in a balanced and purposeful way to support children's learning and development. Staff carefully consider the use of screens to ensure that they enhance learning and do not replace active, practical and play-based experiences, which remain central to the EYFS curriculum. Staff ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place.

21. Continuous review

Leaders regularly review safeguarding practice, ensuring that systems are effective, transparent and responsive. We are open to challenge and committed to continual improvement so that all children remain safe and well supported.

This policy reflects current statutory requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage and supports the school's commitment to providing high-quality early education, safeguarding and inclusion.