



*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.” Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, 2021*

At Bilston CE Primary School, we understand that a child’s early development is paramount in laying the foundations for being successful learners in the future. During the year of Early Years education that we offer in Reception, we aim to provide a safe, language rich, stimulating environment that allows all learners to flourish through a bespoke, carefully planned curriculum, centred around the key skills and knowledge that we want our pupils at Bilston CE Primary to have and know, enriched with a wealth of opportunities and experiences. We aim to instill a love of learning in all of our children, making them inquisitive learners with a desire to know more. Through a clear progression of skills and knowledge in all 7 areas of learning, we aim to make rapid progress from a range of starting points to end of year learning goals with a drive to fully prepare our children for transition into the next phase of their education.

As a Church school, our curriculum is underpinned by the school’s core Christian values, these are evident through everything that we do and, regardless of faith, we aim that all of our children become kind, respectful, courageous and resilient in their learning and wider life.

As in all areas of the school, our practice is inclusive in Early Years. All children, regardless of special educational needs or disabilities, gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic background, are given every opportunity to achieve their full potential.

We value the contribution of parents and families, recognising that a strong partnership between school and home has a significant impact on a child’s academic and social development. We operate an ‘open door’ policy where all parents are welcome to share their successes and concerns and we have a range of support available to parents and families for whom this is necessary.

### **Our EYFS Curriculum at Bilston CE Primary School**

At Bilston CE Primary School, we pride ourselves on providing a nurturing, supportive, high quality early years education for our pupils that ignites a love of learning and creates firm foundations for lifelong learning.

As a school, we have carefully considered the range of starting points that our children have upon entering our Reception class from a variety of settings. Using experience of our pupils along with expectations of the 3-4 year milestones from Development Matters, we have identified the skills and knowledge that we expect and hope for our children upon entry in all seven areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design.

From this, we have mapped out the journey from entry to end of year goals, identifying how we will achieve not only the Early Learning Goals set out by the EYFS Framework, but also our own End of Summer milestones that we feel will enable successful transition into Year 1 for our children, providing breadth to the curriculum offer.

Learning in Early Years is ultimately led by the children, allowing children to take ownership of their learning, following their own interests and needs. This said, in order to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that covers progression of skills and knowledge in all areas of learning, we have planned out a topic based approach to learning that is centred around language rich texts. This allows us to make enhancements to the learning environment led by children's interest in the texts but also plan opportunities to explicitly teach new learning. Much of our continuous provision within the learning environment is open ended and allows children to lead their own learning, developing their confidence, resilience and independence as learners, in line with the Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** – Engagement - finding out and exploring, playing with what they know, being willing to 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** - Motivation – being involved and concentrating, persisting, being proud of their achievements.
- **Creative and Critical Thinking** – Thinking – having their own ideas, making links, working with ideas.

## **Communication and Language**

Developing Communication and Language skills is integral to everything we do in EYFS. Through carefully chosen texts, regular timetabled opportunities to share stories and Nursery rhymes and high quality interactions between adults and children in the setting, we can make rapid progress with our children for many of whom, starting points in this area of learning are typically low. With a growing number of pre-verbal children entering Reception in recent years, we have embarked on a whole school approach to using Makaton with trained members of staff introducing signing to staff, children and parents. This is designed to support not only those who have special educational needs but also those for whom English is an additional language, supporting them with language acquisition.

## **Early Reading**

At Bilston CE Primary School, we follow Read, Write Inc. (RWI) phonics. This provides us with an accredited, systematic approach to daily phonics. Children's phonic knowledge is quickly assessed upon entry and we start introducing sounds as early as possible. Children are taught to read sounds and blend them orally. Those who are ready to move to more independent blending are taught with other children of a similar ability with the intention of making rapid progress from typically low starting points. Sound writing is also introduced for those who are physically able to do so. For those who are not yet ready for writing in a book, opportunities for larger scale movements are provided to ensure that children develop the necessary gross motor skills first. After October half term, children are assessed and put into smaller ability groups, this makes teaching more individualised, allowing children to make accelerated progress in line with their ability. Half termly assessment continues throughout the year and children are grouped accordingly. Children take home a weekly home reading book to share with their parents. Parents are given questions to guide their interactions with children in response to the book and once children are able to decode words, their weekly home reading books are chosen in line with the school book banding system to allow children the opportunity to practise this. Parents are invited to a RWI workshop at the start of the year to explain how the programme works and children are set phonics video links from the RWI Portal each week as part of our Home Learning offer. The intention of this is not only to provide consolidation for children but also to make phonics teaching explicit to parents, showing them the ways in which we teach early reading so that they can support their child at home.

## **Mathematics**

Maths is taught in line with the rest of the school. Following the NCETM progression model, enhanced by resources and ideas from Power Maths and White Rose. As with all other areas of

learning, we have broken down the key areas of Maths into termly milestones in order to get full coverage of all skills and knowledge in order to meet not only the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS Framework but also end of year skills and knowledge that we feel will fully prepare our children for Year 1 and beyond.

Maths in EYFS is built into everything we do, daily routines such as self registration with ten frames, daily number songs and setting the date are just some examples of these. Our approach to Maths is very practical, children become very familiar with a range of manipulatives and representations of number that they can use to support them as they move through the school. When children first join us in September, staff quickly establish children's mathematical knowledge through play based opportunities. From Week 3, Maths is taught in a timetabled 30 minute session where children are divided into smaller, mixed ability groups to allow them to be explicitly taught new concepts with individual access to a range of manipulatives and opportunities for partner work, ensuring that all children are engaged all of the time. For those who are not yet meeting the expected standard or for those who may find a particular concept difficult, staff will use an 'objective led planning' style in addition to the Maths lesson where opportunities to enhance children's own play will be carefully used to develop the required skill. Number Sense is also used daily as a short session to develop children's basic understanding of number.

### **Cultural Capital**

We understand the importance of life experiences or 'cultural capital' for our children and as a school we provide rich learning experiences that take place beyond the classroom. Whether this is regularly using our excellent Forest Schools provision, taking the children out on termly educational visits to places such as the farm, safari park and on a steam train or providing exciting opportunities within the setting such as growing and planting, caring for our own creatures like caterpillars, tadpoles and worms and having visits from the local emergency services. We encourage a 'can do' attitude in our children and encourage them to try new experiences, promoting good physical and mental health.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is ongoing in EYFS and comes from staff knowledge of our children. Staff focus their time on interacting with children, carefully considering children's prior knowledge and next steps, looking for ways to deepen and move their learning on. Each child has a weekly observation in their learning journey book to capture their learning across all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Whilst learning is mapped out according to the expected milestones in our skills and knowledge progression map, we know that children develop at different rates and there isn't a 'one size fits all' in terms of what a child is able to do when. We feel that our 'on entry' expectations are realistic and end of Summer expectations, in line with National expectations, are aspirational. The journey that children take to get there will be personal to them as individuals and we endeavour to support them as effectively as possible in reaching their full potential, making good progress from their starting points.

More formal termly assessments take place against the milestones set out in our skills and knowledge progression map and from this, we identify areas for development across the cohort and ensure that progress is good for all children, including vulnerable groups such as those with SEND or those who are disadvantaged.

We feel that our curriculum offer and day to day practice allows children to develop as individuals, growing in confidence, resilience and tolerance of others. We have high aspirations for all of our children and we nurture kind, respectful, hardworking and inquisitive learners who have a strong moral conscience and a desire to know more.