



## The Early Years Foundation Stage at Bishop's Castle Primary School

### Our Curriculum Drivers at Bishop's Castle Primary School

Confident  
Communicator

Widening Horizons

Growth Mindset

Healthy Body  
Healthy Mind

### Our Core Values

Ready

Respectful

Safe

We have devised four drivers that run through our whole school curriculum. They are tailored to our pupil's specific needs and take account of the opportunities and challenges in the context of our school community and our pupils' lives.

## What are our intentions for children in the EYFS?

- Make a positive difference to every child's life and give them the best possible start in education.
- Be committed to the development of children as individuals, giving all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Build strong foundations, providing a safe, happy, nurturing and stimulating environment where children can thrive.
- Provide an inspiring and tailored curriculum where children are encouraged to build resilience, independence, ambition and a lifelong love of learning through a play-based approach.
- Develop memorable learning experiences, based on children's own interests and passions, allowing them to make decisions, problem-solve, retain knowledge, apply skills, make connections and develop links in their understanding.
- Maximise opportunities to build upon the knowledge and skills that children already have, whilst acknowledging the varied starting points, and extend these further by broadening experiences, creating high expectations and developing perseverance and self-belief.
- Be spontaneous, ignite interest and inspire children to explore the world around them.
- Our enabling environment will be rich and varied, valuing imagination and creativity, whilst seeking to create a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning through quality indoor and outdoor provision that is deliberately designed to reflect the needs of the children.
- Skilful adult interactions will be fundamental in helping children to reach their full potential.
- Bishops Castle Primary School is centred around developing the 'whole child' with emphasis being placed on personal, social and emotional development. We want to give children the best chance to become well-rounded, happy, healthy individuals, ready to succeed in an ever-changing world.
- Support children in building positive attitudes and relationships.
- Our setting will be rich in language with a strong focus on developing communication, language and oracy, acknowledging that children's spoken language is the foundation of all thinking and learning.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions.

## How do we teach what we teach?

The children will learn new skills, acquire new knowledge, and demonstrate understanding through the seven areas of the EYFS statutory framework:

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

This sets the standards that all early year's providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well. Through our knowledge of each child, built upon by continual observations, quality interactions and formative assessments, the EYFS team plan exciting and engaging activities that will move the children's learning forward. Our curriculum centres around well thought out termly themes but with the flexibility to follow the children's own interests. The curriculum, therefore, is our cultural capital where we build upon early experiences, giving opportunities to explore, take risks, inspire learning, develop curiosity and experience awe and wonder.

Children learn through a carefully constructed balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. There are frequent opportunities throughout the day for the children to participate in 'Discovery Time' where experiences in the provision, inside and outside, are both engaging and challenging. The curriculum is planned in a cross-curricula way to enable all aspects of child development. Skilful interactions with the adults, as well as the EYFS team being highly reflective in terms of the curriculum, provision and the environment, leads to depth of learning across the curriculum. As appropriate, the team will build in opportunities for focused group work. This means that the teacher can systematically check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly, and provide real-time verbal feedback which results in a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning.

Play underpins our approach to learning – children learn by playing and exploring, being active and thinking creatively and critically. We want our children to develop resilience, independence and a sense of wellbeing. Children will make their own decisions about where they learn best and therefore the whole EYFS environment will be rich in opportunities across all areas of learning. Through frequent learning walks within the environment, staff are highly reflective and adapt current practice and provision accordingly.

Our inclusive approach means that we endeavour to meet the needs of all of our children, not just the majority. We provide effective and focused interventions for those children who find aspects of their learning challenging and who are not on track to meet expectations. Support from parents will be enlisted from an early stage in order to build the partnership, working together to ensure that the children have the best possible opportunities to succeed and make progress.

At Bishops Castle Primary School, we feel passionately about children's reading and believe that good quality, engaging books are crucial for all children. For Phonics, we are excited to be following the DfE validated 'Little Wandle' programme. We work through the entire Little Wandle Programme until the children can successfully utilise their phonic knowledge and blending skills to read fluently. Children need to learn to read as quickly as reasonably possible, so they

can move from learning to read, to reading to learn, giving them access to the treasure house of reading. In Reception and Year 1 the children have daily phonics lessons. They will be taught 4 new grapheme phoneme correspondences (GPCs) per week, plus a review lesson on a Friday. Knowing a GPC means being able to match a phoneme (sound) to a grapheme (written representation) and vice versa. The children will also learn a series of 'tricky words'. Tricky words are those words which cannot be sounded out using their phonemes. We assess the children every five to six weeks to check progress. We ensure that a child's reading book correlates to their phonological skills, linking directly with the teaching of phonics. The children will have the opportunity to select an additional reading book to share with an adult at home which will be a little more challenging (not all decodable), but will provide exposure to a wider range of vocabulary. Any child who needs extra support will have keep-up sessions planned for them. Phonics sessions are also used to develop letter formation and handwriting.

We follow the Talk 4 Writing in the Early Years approach to teaching writing. The approach enables children to internalise the language structures needed to write through 'talking the text'. The approach moves from dependence towards independence, with the teacher using shared and guided teaching to develop the ability in children to write creatively and powerfully.

There will be an increased emphasis on the importance of developing communication and language. There will be a strong focus on communication, and the development of children's spoken language will underpin all areas of learning as this is the foundation of thinking and learning. Adults will have a crucial part to play in developing and embedding early language skills and extending vocabulary across a broad curriculum. Adults will be role-models and engage in frequent, meaningful conversations whilst also encouraging this to take place peer to peer.

Developing fine and gross motor skills is vital in a child's all-round development. It is important to start working with children on building their fine motor skills early on as these are the cornerstone of so many things that we expect children to be able to do. Fine motor skills will develop and improve as they move through childhood. In Reception we carry out daily fine motor skills activities and encourage parents to do this at home too. We work with the children to develop muscle tone and strength in their fingers, hands and wrists as well as developing hand-eye coordination. By providing quality support and provision for the development of fine motor skills children will be able to carry out a range of tasks independently and effectively including manipulating objects, dressing, holding a pencil, writing.

Children need to develop competent gross motor skills to support their fine motor skills development. Through a combination of discrete lessons and opportunities to explore the environment freely, children will be encouraged to develop whole body movements enabling them to become increasingly coordinated, confident, agile and flexible. Naturally this will take place at different stages for different children but our environment and provision will give them time and space to do so.

In Reception, we use Mastering Number and White Rose Maths. We follow Mastering Number closely to develop children's number sense, a key priority in early Maths, and then use White Rose to develop children's understanding of numerical pattern, shape, space and measure. Number sense is an intuitive understanding of numbers, their size, relationships, and how they connect. If a

child can achieve number sense, they'll have the perfect foundation for future challenges in maths and related subjects. Children with strong number sense think flexibly and fluently about numbers; they can visualise and talk comfortably about numbers. Children will be introduced to subitising, both perceptually, (being able to 'just see' how many are in a group, without counting), and conceptually, (being able to see numbers within numbers e.g. 6 is made of 4 and 2.) This helps to develop efficient calculating skills. There will be a daily Maths input and sessions are carefully planned using games, concrete resources, Numicon, building on prior learning as well as real life experiences. Maths sessions will start with mastering numbers 0-5 and then progress through to 10. It is important that children develop a really strong number sense to 10. Knowledge of numbers to 10 will underpin teaching teens numbers and beyond. Children are encouraged to use mathematical language in all areas of the curriculum and through their play.

## How do we know what pupils have learnt and how well they have learnt it?

Our curriculum and provision must meet the needs of all of our children, including disadvantaged and SEND pupils, therefore we spend time evaluating, reflecting and reviewing. This is done by observing, talking to the children, looking at learning outcomes and analysing data. The impact of our curriculum is also reflected in having well rounded, happy and confident children ready to transition into Year 1, with the skills needed to access the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

Within the first 6 weeks of starting Reception, children will undertake the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment which focuses on communication, language, literacy, and maths. We will also use ongoing observations and assessments to develop an internal baseline assessment. This will identify children's starting points across all areas of learning and provide an understanding of the whole child.

Continual observations and informal assessments are integral to understanding a child's learning and development. These will help to shape the teaching and learning experiences and plays an important part in recognising children's progress, understand needs, planning activities and providing necessary support. They should not however, take adults away from the children for long periods of time. There should be increased interactions where adults need to draw upon their expert professional judgement along with their own knowledge of each child.

As a school we use Tapestry as an online learning journal. We use it to capture *significant* moments / observations that can be shared with parents, as well as to support tracking where we can build up a picture of what each child can do and what their next steps are.

As well as the baseline at the start of the year, internal assessments will be carried out in Autumn and Spring using the non-statutory Development Matters as guidance. Children will be identified as 'on track', 'just below' or 'below'.

At the end of the summer term, we will complete the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile' (EYFSP) for all children. This will assess their knowledge, skills, understanding and attainment at the end of the academic year against expected levels (Early Learning Goals), along with their readiness for Year 1. We will report whether each child is 'emerging' or 'expected' for each of the 17 aspects. Our aim is for children to achieve a Good Level of Development, with this outcome being higher than in previous years and higher than the National Average. Whilst there is no 'exceeding' judgement, it will be part of our practice to provide a thorough overview of attainment to the Year 1 teachers.