

Balcombe CE Primary School!



Our Early Years vision for our youngest learners in Reception -
The Early Years Intent, Implementation and Impact Statement.



Balcombe Church of England (C) Primary School

Our Early Years Intent, Implementation and Impact Statement – our vision for our youngest learners.



‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential...’ (Early Years Framework, 2021).

At Balcombe, we aim to provide for our EYFS learners the best possible start to school life, with the best possible outcomes for ALL.

Our early year’s practice reflects the guidance set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) and ‘Development Matters in the EYFS’ (2021).

Our Early Years Intent

We aim to

- **Collaborate and work with parents** and recognise children’s prior learning at home, building on what they already know.
- Provide a **happy, safe and nurturing environment** where children develop as confident, independent and **resilient** learners.
- Create **a curriculum which is exciting and motivates** children to love learning and be **curious** about the world around them. We therefore provide an engaging curriculum to extend the children’s cultural capital, but at the same time, we follow children’s interests and ideas to foster a lifelong love of learning.
- Enable children to **develop positive relationships**, to interact and co-operate with other children and to be aware of and to **respect the needs of others**, giving and receiving **kindness, care and affection**.
- Celebrate how all **our children are incredibly unique** – with individual learning styles, interests and knowledge of the world around them. We want to ensure that learning is accessible for all. We want to make sure that all children **promptly receive any extra help they need**, so they can progress well in their learning.
- Create **confident communicators** – happy and willing to share their views and news and delight in using language, in all its forms, to express who they are and how they feel.
- Enable children to develop a genuine **love of different books, of reading and of learning to read** and where our phonics teaching enables ALL of our learners to become readers by the end of reception.

- **Prepare children for the next stage in their school life** – so that they are happy and confident as learners, with the skills, knowledge and understanding across the whole of the EYFS curriculum to help them succeed in year 1.

Our School Values:

As a whole school, these are the core values which we expect all children to demonstrate.

Be respectful **Be ambitious** **Be resilient** **Be caring** **Be creative** **Be curious**

Be the best that you can be!



Implementation

There are four distinct, but complimentary themes that guide our Early Years practice. These themes are:

- **A Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

In order to implement our Early Years aims into practice, we always refer to these themes.

Principle: A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is **a unique child** who is constantly learning, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. In order to know and understand the individual needs of our learners, we continuously carry out **observations and assessments** on them to ensure that we can plan the most appropriate tasks that meet their individual needs.

Observations, assessment and planning for children's unique needs

Prior to children starting school, teachers spend time speaking to families, pre-schools and nurseries to gain an understanding of the whole child: their strengths, interests as well as their knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

During the first few weeks in Reception, all staff use ongoing observations and conversations with the child to further develop their understanding of the children's skills knowledge and understanding of the world around them. This process helps us, with our families, to

identify each individual's starting points in all areas so we can plan experiences for children that meet their individual needs and interests and build on from what they know.

In addition to our own baseline observations, we also use the Department for Education's 'Reception Baseline Assessment' (RBA). This is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. It assesses children's abilities in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language.

We also observe the children's well-being and involvement closely (using the Leuven Scale) and talk to children regularly to ensure that children are **happy and safe** in our nurturing environment so that they can develop as confident, independent and **resilient** learners.

We create an Individual Development Plan for each child consisting of the best 'next steps' for learning and we share these with families to maintain a joint approach to children's learning. We then measure the progress of our children against these starting points at regular checkpoints throughout the year to track progress – at least every half term.

Ongoing Observation:

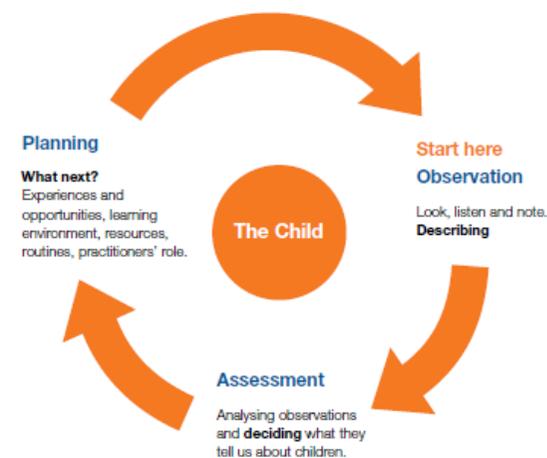
As children settle into school life we continue to;

- **Observe** each child's development and learning.
- **Assess** progress they make.
- **Plan** for their next steps, **building on from what they know and can do**.

We continue to invite families to share with us their own observations of their children to help build a clear and whole picture of the child. We do this through

- Informal conversations.
- Inviting families to send in WOW notes (observations from home) that describe their children's achievements from a parents' point of view
- Sharing their views and ideas on Seesaw.
- Inviting families to termly open afternoons to view their child's learning with them.
- Inviting parents and carers to parents' evenings, twice a year.

This formative assessment process is at the heart of our EYFS class. Every day, we dedicate time to observing children. However, this does not involve prolonged periods of time away from the children and excessive paper work. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgements through discussions with other practitioners, photographs and physical examples of learning such as a child's drawing.



Tracking pupil progress

We review children's progress every half term to ensure that children are making progress and are ready for the next term's learning and therefore on track to meet or exceed end of year expectations – referred to as Early Learning Goals.

The Senior Leadership Team monitor the progress of the learners each term with the EYFS staff to ensure that children are making progress – discussing each child individually.

If our observations raise concerns over a pupil and they are not making the progress we hope them to make, then classroom practices are adapted to ensure better progress. The SENCO will, at this point, also monitor progress.



The end of the EYFS Reception year - The EYFS Profile

In the final term of the Reception year, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. Children are assessed against 17 areas of the curriculum, otherwise known as Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Practitioners' knowledge and professional judgement of the children make a 'best fit' judgement.

The children are assessed as achieving a 1 or 2 against each of the 17 areas, or, Early Learning Goals:

- 1 = Emerging ELG – not yet meeting the expected levels
- 2 = Expected ELG – meeting the expected levels of development

Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the Profile report, enabling a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 which will assist in the planning of learning in the next academic year.

This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help school benchmark and identify improvements.

Equal Opportunities

At Balcombe School we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

In getting to know the uniqueness of every child we aim to support children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture and;

- Identify any need for support.
- Value and respect all children and families equally.

Inclusion

We meet the needs of all learners through;

- Working closely with our families in a variety of different ways: being available to talk with them every day, arranging meetings with them, inviting their views on their child's learning (as described earlier in this document).
- Liaising with relevant outside agencies to get the best advice to support all learners (school nurse, OT, SALT ...) where appropriate.
- Ensuring children have daily opportunities to engage in self-initiated learning so that they have opportunities to explore their own interests and skills, knowledge and understanding and that all adults have opportunities to observe these.
- Creating 'Individual Development Plans' for all learners in the EYFS that are shared and discussed with their families so that we can maintain a joint approach.
- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Being flexible – adapting what we do in response to the children's needs using a wide range of teaching strategies.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Monitoring children's progress and acting to provide support as necessary.

In addition to the 'Individual Development Plans.' mentioned above, SEND Individual Education Plans are completed for those pupils for whom progress or attainment is a concern and who have been identified as having Special Educational Needs. Please refer to our school SEND policy/Local Offer document.

We have a range of additional intervention and support for children who may experience barriers to learning, or are showing a greater depth of understanding and need further challenge. This includes, for example, sessions for developing speech and language, social skills, fine motor skills, phonics, and mathematics.

Regular monitoring of teaching and learning by SLT and the EYFS Leader ensure staff develop good subject knowledge as well as a knowledge of child development. The EYFS Leader ensures staff receive CPD specific to Early Years to develop their practice. For example, we have offered CPD on effective observations in order to understand where pupils are as well as their 'next steps,' for learning, communication and language, speech and language interventions, fine motor development as well as self-regulation.

Welfare

We know 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.

We carry out risk assessments on a daily basis to ensure that the environment is safe for them to explore independently and take risks in. We educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. (See EYFS Risk Assessment File).

In addition, we carry out risk assessments for children who have health and medical needs in order that they can access the curriculum with their peers and do so safely (see EYFS Risk Assessment File).

We aim to always protect the well-being of all children. We use the 'Leuven Scale of Well-being and Involvement' to assist us as we observe children and these help support us in tracking and ensuring children are well, happy and safe. Our termly pupil conferencing seeks to ensure the same and always asks children if they feel happy and safe and if they have someone they can ask for help if they need it.

See whole school Safeguarding policies.

At Balcombe CE Primary School, we understand that we are required to;

- Promote the welfare of children (which we do through implementing whole school policies including the Health and Safety and Safeguarding policies).
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill (which we do through whole school policies as well as our 'Starting School Booklet').
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs (as demonstrated through our Behaviour Policy).
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so, with relevant safety checks carried out.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose (as demonstrated through our Risk Assessments)
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children, with respect being paid to confidentiality/data protection.

Principle: Positive Relationships

At Balcombe CE Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong independent learners from secure relationships with all those around them. **Relationships are fundamental to all learning.** We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

All staff involved with the EYFS will develop good relationships with **all** children; interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them, bond with them and develop secure attachments with them. As well as teaching and observing them we play and bond with them – everyday.

At our school the EYFS teacher acts a ‘Key Person’ to all children in EYFS – this means that they are responsible for bonding with all of them, as well as for assessing and planning for the whole class. The teaching assistants support the teacher in observing and planning for the children’s next steps.

Parents as Partners/home school links

We recognise the role that parents have played and their future role in educating their children. We work closely with our families through offering a range of different opportunities to join in with school life, and adapting these to suit the needs of different families. For example, we invite all new parents and carers to;

- Meet with EYFS staff and the Head Teacher during the term before their child starts school in order to begin to establish and develop home-school relationships, as well as outline our starting school programme.
- Meet with the EYFS teacher on an individual basis to share their views on their child’s development. These views are recorded and used as we plan for children’s learning.
- Join in ‘Come and Play!’ sessions at school with their child so that we can observe and play with children together.
- Create ‘All About Me’ books with their child full of pictures and images that children share with their new friends when starting school.

We also support our families in understanding school life by providing clear written communications in our ‘Starting School’ booklet that outlines our curriculum and our approach to learning, activities and procedures and we guide parents through this verbally during our meetings with them.

Once children have started school, we;

- Ensure that staff are available every day before and after school to talk to families. We open the classroom early, allowing a staggered start to children arriving, and meaning that staff are available to talk to parents and carers.
- Invite families to send in WOW notes (observations from home) that describes their children’s achievements from a parents’ point of view.

- Invite families to termly open afternoons to view their child's learning with them.
- Invite parents and carers to parents' evenings, twice a year.
- Send curriculum letters home each term as well as their child's 'Individual Development Plan' to keep parents informed of their child's curriculum and learning needs.
- Hold a parents' evenings in the Autumn and Spring term. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress (including their child's achievements in the Early Learning Goals, in the Summer term).
- Provide a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents, e.g. fitness days, outings, learning questionnaires, nativity plays, class assemblies, celebration assemblies, Sports Day...
- Hold workshops for parents and carers on areas of the curriculum.
- Ensure that there is space in the children's 'Learning Journals' for parents to add comments relating to the children's achievements.

Preschool Relationships

During the Summer term prior to children starting school, we communicate and liaise with our local preschools to discuss and observe the new intake of children. Staff and children from preschool are regularly invited to school events (Sports Day, Christmas productions etc.). Where children continue to attend preschool provision, while only attending school part time, we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children's achievements.

Transition into KS1 – Developing Relationships after the EYFS

The Reception and Key Stage 1 teacher work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible. In order to maintain this vital link, we ensure that the following takes place;

- Reception children meet the Key Stage 1 teacher regularly throughout the year during a variety of different learning opportunities including class assemblies, playtimes, story and song times as well as other whole school activities.
- In the summer term prior to starting year 1, Reception children visit their teacher for some play sessions as well as story and physical development sessions.
- EYFS moderation takes place with the KS1 teacher to enable KS1 to develop an understanding of teaching and learning style in the EYFS.
- EYFS and KS1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs throughout the year and in the Summer term.
- Records and assessments (including the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile) are passed on to the KS1 teacher.
- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms encouraging less dependence on adult support.

Principle: Enabling Environments

At Balcombe CE Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development.

We know that children learn and develop in enabling environments, where

- They feel emotionally safe and secure.
- There is a strong, positive relationships between everyone.
- There are resources relevant to their interests, needs and stage of development.

Our environment

- Values all people – their needs and interests.
- Values all areas of learning.

We aim to offer

- Stimulating resources relevant to the children's needs, interests, culture and community.
- Learning opportunities through a balance of play and playful teaching.
- Support for children to take risks and explore and gain confidence and independence as learners.

We will achieve this through:

- Carrying out daily risk assessments prior to the morning session starting, to make sure that the environment is safe for all learners to explore and play in independently.
- Termly risk assessments on the learning environment – reviewing resources carefully.
- Making the emotional environment safe; where every day children experience opportunities to play and learn and build positive relationships with adults and peers.
- At least every term formally, then informally throughout the term, finding out about the children's learning needs and interests through individual pupil conferencing and asking families about their child via questionnaires. This is to ensure that the planning and resources in the environment reflect the needs and interests of the children.
- Ensuring that everyday activities are planned for both the inside and outside. At certain times children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor environment throughout the school day.

- Ensuring that the learning environment is divided into a variety of different workshop areas (for example, quiet book areas, construction areas, making workshops, role play areas, investigation zones etc.). Each area is carefully labelled to ensure that children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.
- Planning for the environment every week – adding and developing resources to ensure each area stimulates the learners and meets their ever-changing needs.

Principle: Learning and Development

We have created our Early Years Curriculum using the guidance set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) and 'Development Matters in the EYFS' (2021). We have also used our knowledge of our children.

There are **seven areas of learning** that make up our Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Three of these areas are called **prime areas of learning and development** and these are:

1. **Communication and Language**
2. **Physical Development**
3. **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

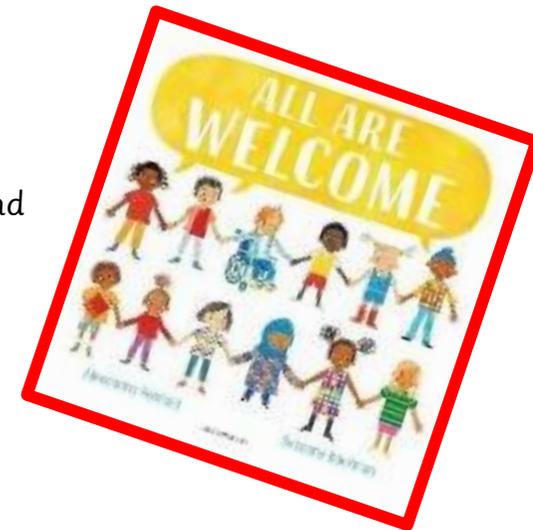
The above three areas of learning are particularly crucial for igniting children's enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, relationships to form and thrive.

The four other areas of learning and development are:

4. **Literacy**
5. **Mathematics**
6. **Understanding the World**
7. **Expressive arts and design**

We value **all** areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

For each of these areas of learning, we have mapped out an outline of the skills, knowledge and understanding that children need to secure with in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms in order to be able to meet the Early Learning Goals at the end of the reception year and will be ready for year 1. Each term's skills and knowledge will build on from the previous – so that we are continually building on children's knowledge in a systematic way.



We track children's progress throughout each term, to ensure that they are ready for the next and adapt our plans should children exceed them, or need more support and revision. For more detail - see our **EYFS Long Term Plan**.

Every week, EYFS staff introduce a new theme, or context for learning. to provide inspiration for learning, to add to their cultural capital. Please refer to our **EYFS Overview of Learning** to see our planned themes to inspire our current class. Staff also provide the flexibility for children to follow their own interests and ideas and motivate them to be curious learners.

Our short term planning demonstrates how each day is carefully planned so that children have directed teaching in phonics and maths as well as other areas of the curriculum. Direct teaching sessions are followed by small focused group or individual work. This means the teacher can systematically check the children's understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time, verbal feedback which will have a strong impact on individual progress.

Alongside this approach, we provide children with opportunities to learn through play, to explore their own ideas and set their own goals so that they learn to **explore their ideas, be active learners and to create and think critically**.



Teaching and Learning Style

Essentially, children are unique and learn in different ways and at different rates. Therefore, teaching styles vary according to the needs and stage of development of each child.

We aim to deliver all the areas through planned and purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, outdoor and indoor learning.

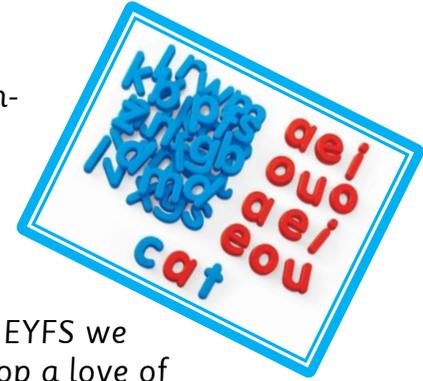
Key features of our curriculum.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Positive relationships are so important to us that we provide daily opportunities for children to **develop relationships**, to learn to interact and co-operate with others fairly and to learn to **respect others**, giving and receiving **kindness, care and affection**.

Communication and Language/Oracy

We recognise that oracy not only improves academic outcomes, but is a life skill to ensure success beyond school. Oracy develops children's thinking and understanding, which in turn promotes self-confidence, resilience and well-being. Our enabling environments and warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they develop as communicators. In addition, daily opportunities to learn new vocabulary, rhymes by heart and talk about or act out stories aid our children's love of talking.



Literacy

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and our aim is to encourage a love of reading right from the start. In the EYFS we have chosen key books to focus on each term. The aim is to expose children to a range of texts that not only develop a love of reading, but have been chosen specifically to develop their oracy, vocabulary and comprehension. These books will be embedded in our provision through activities, story sessions and are on display for children to access independently. Through this, children begin to internalise new vocabulary, language patterns and begin to retell stories.

Phonics

We follow the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' programme to ensure consistency across the school. In Reception, children are introduced to Phase 2 and 3 where they will develop a knowledge of letter sounds and the ability to segment and blend skills to decode words. During the Summer term, children may move on to Phase 4 when they are ready.

We work closely with parents, providing workshops and information so that they can support their child as they learn. Children are given books that match their phonic knowledge in order for them to apply their learning with the aim of becoming successful, confident and fluent readers.

Phonic assessments are carried out every half term to quickly identify pupils that are not making expected progress. Our aim is for children to 'keep up' rather than 'catch up' where possible and we provide daily individual support to help children if they need it.

Mathematics

In Reception, we use the NCTEM maths progression to support us in planning for our children.

We want to ensure that all children develop firm mathematical foundations in a way that is engaging and appropriate for their age. Children in Reception have daily, 'Maths Meetings' with adults who support them in developing mathematical thinking, knowledge and skills. Pupils learn through practical games and tasks using objects and then have purposeful, mathematical routines throughout the day to help them rehearse the skills they have been taught in lessons. For example, they may be counting all the team points won throughout the week, measuring the plants in the garden or working out how many wheels they need to create a model, all to rehearse and enjoy their mathematical skills.

Wider Curriculum

Our wider curriculum is taught through the learning areas; 'Understanding of the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design.' EYFS staff have a good understanding of how ELG's feed into the National Curriculum through our robust planning processes. Also, colleagues throughout the school are also aware of the key ELG's that link to each foundation subject and the progression of the subject.

Exciting, purposeful and contextual activities are planned to build on children's natural curiosity. For example, building a boat for their favourite toy enables them to think like a 'Scientist' and 'Engineer' as they explore a range of materials and test their own ideas.

Building further on our oracy focus, children will be encouraged to employ subject specific language in foundation subjects, and such vocabulary will be modelled, both verbally and orally, by practitioners.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning.

We value not only what children know, but how they learn. There are particularly important key characteristics of effective learning and they are as follows

1. Playing and exploring – where children investigate and experience things and 'have a go.' We promote play and exploration by:

- Providing a balanced day, every day, where children have space and time to play both outdoors and indoors and in doing so engage in a balance of both self-initiated learning and adult led tasks.
- Planning and resourcing a challenging environment to stimulate children's play and ideas.
- Practitioners extending and developing children's language and communication in their play through observation and intervention – playing with children.
- Celebrating and displaying achievements of children from their play and exploration in the classroom.

2.Active Learning – where children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. We promote active learning by:



out

- Continuously developing our environment to ensure that it is interesting, attractive and accessible to every child so that they can learn independently.
- Providing daily opportunities for self-initiated play – balanced with adult led opportunities – giving time for children to follow interests and lines of enquiry
- Encouraging children to set their own targets and state what they would like to learn next.
- Planning activities and an environment that reflects their interests and patterns in their play.

3. Creating and thinking critically - where children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things. We promote creativity and critical thinking by:

- Planning open ended activities.
- Modelling being creative – encouraging children to help solve problems and communicate ideas in different ways (through movement, dance, building ...)

Impact

Our observations, assessments and discussions with our learners and their families, will demonstrate consistently that children are happy, safe and well in our setting. Moreover, our tracking of their well-being and involvement will show that children are consistently motivated and highly involved in their learning as confident, independent and **resilient** learners, who can be **curious** about the world around them.

Our observations, assessments and discussions with our learners and their families will demonstrate that our children have positive relationships and can **respect** others, give and receive kindness, **care** and affection.

By the end of the Reception year, children will make at least good progress from their starting points and, having accessed a broad curriculum which meets their unique needs, they will be equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to be ready for future learning in year 1 – as set out in our Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum documents.

We measure progress and children's learning across the year through formative and summative assessment which are based on the practitioners and the family's knowledge of the child. Children will promptly receive any extra help they may need, so they can progress well in their learning. We aim to exceed the National and Local Authority data for children achieving Good Level of Development.

The judgements of our school are moderated with other schools and the EYFS Lead organises moderating events in other schools and has been a statutory moderator for the county. This means judgements are secure and consistent with government guidelines.

Children are supported by adults that are well trained and passionate about providing the best education for every child.

As a school, all children will be able to demonstrate that they can **be respectful, be ambitious, be resilient, be caring, be creative, be curious and be the best that they can be!**

