Butlers Court School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Our Butlers Court Family nurtures kind, resilient, ambitious and curious children. Our caring environment supports well-being and self-belief, encouraging everyone to flourish. Through a wide range of experiences and opportunities, every child has the chance to shine, developing a love of learning and prepared for the ever-changing world and a future of possibilities.

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1. Aims/Objectives

At Butlers Court School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment where every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice; with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential.

As outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage':
'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.'

2. Legislation - Statutory Framework of EYFS

We adhere to the 'Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework' that applies from September 2021 and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

- The importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At Butlers Court School reception aged children are taught within Panda and Giraffe Class.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking. The children at Butlers Court School are taught individually, in small groups, whole class groups and as a whole reception unit.

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;
- Work in partnership with parents and carers;
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests;
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported;
- Provide a learning environment that emphasises the importance of continuous provision.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

4. EYFS Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy

- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

4.1 Planning and Teaching

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

At Butlers Court School, children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We create medium term plans based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning. These ideas are then used to inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations which identify areas of learning to focus on.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met.

Children will engage in whole group and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions' in both phonics and maths.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: *'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'.*

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact when appropriate to stretch and challenge them further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

5. Assessment in EYFS

At Butlers Court School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes, taking account of the views of both practitioners and parents/carers. We also administer formal assessments at key points in the year as required by the Standards and Testing Agency.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts Reception**, practitioners will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways and all members of staff are encouraged to contribute.

Observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal, online 'Tapestry' Learning Journal. Parents/carers receive a notification when an observation has been added to their child's Learning Journal and they can then view this observation and any related photographs/videos and assessments.

Parents/carers are encouraged to add their own comments and also to upload their own observations to show us what their children are able to do at home.

These ongoing observations are used to inform the EYFS Profile/Development Matters bands. The children's progress is reviewed continually and recorded termly on the school SIMS assessment system. Throughout their time in Reception, parents/carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning; both informally through open afternoon sessions and more formally during parent/teacher consultations.

At the end of the year the EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher - who uses the exemplification documents, and their knowledge of the children to make a judgement.

The children are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help schools benchmark and identify improvements.

6. Working with Parents/Carers

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

- Holding information meetings before the children start school;
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our introductory sessions in school and at our nursery visits carried out in June and July;
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions;
- Inviting them to a parent consultation in the Autumn and SpringTerms to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning;
- Valuing parents' contributions to learning journeys;
- Inviting parents into school termly for our 'Stay and Read sessions'
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books;
- Providing curriculum planning overviews for each topic, each term, highlighting how they can support their child at home;
- Inviting parents into school for 'parent phonics' sessions to demonstrate how we teach phonics and help them support their child;
- Welcoming parents as volunteers into our school;
- Providing parents with an end of year summary report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile;
- We also draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting to talk about their lives, work and experiences.

6.1 Transitions

At Butlers Court School transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Children attend a number of introductory sessions with their parents/carers into Panda and Giraffe Class to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. This is a valuable time to talk 1:1 with parents and children and answer any concerns/queries they may have. Parents and carers are encouraged to complete the 'All About Me' booklet at the time of transition, to record any particular likes and dislikes, interests and information that will further aid the transition process. Our Reception staff also visit the local nurseries and preschools, to familiarise themselves with the children and discuss their learning and emotional needs.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teachers meet with the Year 1 teachers to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data and writing books are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend time towards the end of the school year in the Year 1 classroom to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher and are 'next year ready'.

7. Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Butlers Court School. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety.

In Reception we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children;
- Promote good health, including oral health;
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately;

- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose;
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class iPads are used to photograph children (for Tapestry observations and assessment purposes) and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs.

Butlers Court School has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role. There is always at least one member of EYFS staff who holds the Paediatric First aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Butlers Court School. Backing up this policy is a dedicated safeguarding team which includes four Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, one of whom is the EYFS lead teacher. All staff have access to the 'CPOMS' safeguarding system to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.

7.1 Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies, to ensure individual needs are met and talents fostered. We have a designated SENDCO in school who supports us with any additional needs a child may have.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Leader, Mrs Heather Green is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Headteacher, Assessment Leader and Reception team as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults in the Reception team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets.

Steve Butler

Approved: October 2026

Date to be reviewed: October 2027

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Link to the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage	Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See *Child Protection Framework Policy*
Procedure for responding to illness	See *First Aid Policy*
Administering medicines policy	See *Supporting Pupils With Medical Conditions Policy*
Emergency evacuation procedure	See *Health and Safety Policy*
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See *Child Protection Framework Policy*
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See *Child Protection Framework Policy* See *Health and Safety Policy*
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See *Complaints Policy*