

MALVERN PARISH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

‘LEARNING TOGETHER FOR AN EXCITING FUTURE’



EARLY YEARS POLICY

LAB Approval:

Date: March 2026

Review Date:

Date: March 2029

Member of Staff Responsible:

Name: Martha Worthington



Malvern Parish CE Primary School

‘Learning Together for an Exciting Future’

At Malvern Parish our vision is for all children and adults to become aware of their God given gifts so they can flourish as individuals, achieve academically and build firm foundations for the future.

This vision is deeply rooted in strong Christian tradition and based upon:

“I come that they may have life and have it to the full”. John 10.10

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29.11

We seek to develop our vision through our Christian values of Friendship Respect, Trust, Peace, Truthfulness and Forgiveness and live out these values in every part of school life.



Malvern Parish CE Primary School

Early Years Policy

Malvern Parish C of E Primary School is part of The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust, which is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with registered number 10390487. Its registered office is at Field House, 29 Sansome Walk, Worcester, WR1 1NU.



At Malvern Parish we promote enjoyment, high academic and personal achievement. We aim to provide children with a love for learning and life. We nurture our children to enable them to:

- live life through our Christian Values - Respect, Friendship, Trust, Peace, Truthfulness and Forgiveness
- be happy, independent and self-confident
- be adaptable, determined, resilient and show perseverance when meeting new challenges
- be respectful, polite, tolerant and show empathy to pupils, staff and the wider community
- value others, be sociable, open minded and a great communicator
- be curious, enthusiastic, aspirational and ambitious
- be creative, questioning and have a sense of adventure
- understand and aspire to living a healthy lifestyle

As a school we are committed to providing our children with:

- a happy and interesting learning environment
- positive role models who embody our Christian Values
- an exciting and creative curriculum which prepares children for living in modern Britain
- 'Essential Learning Experiences' to enrich learning and teaching opportunities
- the time to appreciate, explore, investigate and play in the local environment
- the opportunity to share their achievements with parents and the wider community
- a voice to share their thoughts and feelings, whilst helping to shape our school for the future
- the chance to take part competitively and co-operatively so to understand the importance of participation and learn to manage successes and disappointments

As a Church school we give the highest priority to enabling our children to live happy and safe lives. We will implement this policy to reflect our distinctive Christian values.

'Learning Together for an Exciting Future'

Our Early Years Foundation Stage policy describes the framework upon which the practice and philosophy of the Early Years at Malvern Parish C.E Primary School is based. This policy works in conjunction with the whole school policies of Malvern Parish C.E Primary School.

Our Philosophy

At the heart of the Early Years Foundation Stage at Malvern Parish C of E Primary School are our children! We value each individual and their personalised learning journey. We recognise that to enable our learners to flourish and fulfil their potential, we must begin with each child's unique starting point, and then inspire, challenge and support their learning, laying firm foundations for all future learning to build upon.

At Malvern Parish we value play and first-hand experiences. We design our curriculum around the needs and interests of our young learners to ensure that learning and teaching are purposeful, meaningful and memorable. We recognise our role in enabling our learners to flourish emotionally, socially, physically, creatively, and intellectually. We strive to give each and every child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning, at Malvern Parish and beyond.

Our Aims and Principles

We believe that the development of the whole child is crucial and that our provision underpins future attitudes towards learning. At Malvern Parish we strive to:

- Provide a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning, which meets the individual needs and interests of the children.
- Ensure that all children feel safe, valued and respected.
- Develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults.
- Provide a high-quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage document.
- Support children in becoming aware of moral and social values and responsibilities which underpin the Christian values of our school.
- Encourage active learning through first hand experiences during indoor and outdoor play and through verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Encourage children to become self-motivated, confident and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline.
- Value the cultural diversity within our school, community and the wider world to encapsulate Modern British Values.
- Foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Early Years Curriculum

At the heart of our teaching and learning in the early years at Malvern Parish are the characteristics of effective learning which are essential for children's development. These are:

- 1) Playing and Exploring:
 - Finding out and exploring.
 - Using what they know in their play.
 - Being willing to have a go.
- 2) Active Learning:
 - Being involved and concentrating.
 - Keeping on trying.
 - Enjoying achieving what they set out to do.
- 3) Creating and Thinking Critically:
 - Having their own ideas.
 - Using what they already know to learn new things.
 - Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways.

~~At Malvern Parish, we work with pupils, from the beginning of their school career in the foundation stage, to enable them to gain a strong recognition of these learning characteristics. This is achieved by linking the characteristics of effective learning to a British woodland animal. Rory the Reflective Owl, Rena the Relationship Badger, Russell the Resilient Fox and Rosie the Resourceful Squirrel all demonstrably act out these characteristics in four linked, short narratives. Subsequently, children quickly become acutely aware of the creatures and their associated characteristics and how they help them to learn. As pupils get older, the emphasis inevitably switches from the creature to~~

characteristic. We also encourage the children to adopt a Growth Mindset and engage with their own learning power—often emphasizing that we may not be able to do something YET!

Our Learning Characteristics are:

1. **Reflectiveness**
2. **Relationship**
3. **Resilience**
4. ~~**Resourcefulness.**~~

Our Early Years curriculum is supported by the statutory and non-statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Department for Education and Skills). Our Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum supports Learning and Development within seven main curriculum areas:

The Prime Areas:

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

The Specific Areas:

4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

The seven areas identified			
The prime areas			
Communication and language	Physical development	Personal, social and emotional development	
• Listening, attention and understanding	• Gross motor skills	• Self-regulation	
• Speaking	• Fine motor skills	• Managing self	• Building relationships
The specific areas			
Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the world	Expressive arts and design
Word reading	Number and numerical patterns	Past and present	Creating with materials
Comprehension	Shape, space and measures	People, culture and communities	Being imaginative and expressive
Writing		The natural world	

We plan topics that enable the children to meet the Early Learning Goals and work closely with foundation subject leaders and Key Stage 1, year 1 teacher, to ensure that there is a good progression of foundational skills and knowledge to prepare for the transition to year 1 and beyond.

The Prime Areas

Communication and language

- Listening, attention and understanding
- Speaking

At the core of our curriculum is interaction with the children which enables them to develop communication skills. Throughout the year, the children will gain confidence to express themselves in a variety of social and learning situations. There will be opportunities for them to demonstrate their understanding in an assortment of ways and to contextually use a range of broad and rich vocabulary, often supported by visual aids such as widgets which are consistently used throughout school.

Physical development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development and enables them to flourish and pursue happy, healthy and active lives. The two focus areas are:

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills

Physical development is at the heart of every area of learning as the children develop fine skills through a variety of play-based activities. Activities such as threading, construction, using pegs, tweezers, tools, using cutlery and malleable materials such as play dough, all enhance their hand eye coordination and ability to form letters for fluent writing.

Reception pupils have weekly P.E sessions where they develop gross motor skills such as negotiating space, demonstrating strength, balance and coordination and moving energetically in a variety of ways; running, jumping, dancing, hopping and skipping.

In addition to this, the children also have a gross motor development session where they use the bikes and trikes (including balance bikes, scooters and two wheeled peddle bikes) and access the trim trail. They will have the opportunity to practise skills developed in PE lessons such as throwing and catching using the big balls.

The children are taught about a healthy lifestyle and learn that physical activity is an important part of being happy and healthy. As the children become more independent, they learn to manage their own hygiene, including the importance of good oral care such as teeth brushing, and personal needs as well as the importance of making healthy choices. Along with healthy food choices, this will include an awareness of sun safety, hydration, personal hygiene, screen time and good sleep routines.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

As this is such an important skill for the pupils to develop, we provide continuous opportunities for the pupils to develop skills in:

- Self-regulation
- Managing Self
- Building relationships

Integrated into the daily curriculum are opportunities for the children to develop all of these skills through the play-based curriculum. These skills are also reflected in the values and beliefs that are taught to the children in whole school collective worship and behaviour policy.

In reception class, the children begin to learn the foundations of our PSHE curriculum and develop a strong understanding of important relationships, their emotions and how to manage them and how to face challenges! Perseverance and determination are celebrated even when faced with a challenge to overcome!

The Specific Areas Literacy

- **Word Reading**
- **Comprehension**
- **Writing**



At Malvern Parish CofE Primary School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics daily in Reception which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school. The children read in small groups with a Little Wandle trained teacher or teaching assistant and read each book 3 times; for decoding, to develop prosody and to develop comprehension skills.

Word Reading

The Early Learning Goal (ELG) states that children should be able to:

- say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

In order to work towards the ELG, all pupils take part in daily phonics sessions. Particular focus is placed on blending and segmenting skills which are also shared with the parents in a phonics workshop, usually in the Autumn term. Within the classroom, reception pupils have a 'reading garden' where they can go and explore a wide variety of texts; both fiction, non-fiction, poetry, traditional and modern texts along with a text rich environment, often linked to our topic.

Parents are expected to listen to their child read for a short period of time daily. The children will take home a phonetically decodable book that is closely matched to their phonic knowledge from a range of reading schemes in order to practise their reading skills at home. We ask that each phonics practice book is read 3 times; firstly, for decoding, secondly to develop prosody and thirdly to develop comprehension skills. In addition, the children will choose a 'sharing book' which, in Reception Class, we suggest is shared as a 'bedtime story'. By being read to, the children not only develop comprehension skills and prosody by listening to different character voices or expression, but they also begin to value the enjoyment that is found in reading for pleasure.

Following their 'reading squad' Little Wandle reading at school, the children take home this book to share with their family over the weekend. The aim is that they children build up to 95% fluency.

The common exception words are taught throughout the Little Wandle phonics programme too. The 'tricky' part of the word is taught, and these will be shared with parents and children so that they can then practise reading and writing them at home too.

Comprehension

The Early Learning Goal (ELG) states that children should be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

During focus reading sessions and whole class reading, children will be asked to answer questions relation to what they have read or heard, including the meaning of new words. This enables the children to develop purposeful reading skills and also a love of reading for pleasure.

Children are given the opportunity to follow instructions in games or follow recipes to demonstrate an understanding too.

Writing

The Early Learning Goal (ELG) states that children should be able to:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

In addition to their daily phonic sessions (please see reading), pupils are provided with the opportunity to write for a variety of different purposes: lists, labels, recipes, names, menus, stories etc. When children enter reception class, mark making is encouraged and promoted. Writing opportunities are available in all areas of the classroom, both inside and outside. Many of the physical development activities will help to support their writing ability and correct letter formation.

As outlined in the Writing Framework (DfE, 2025) composition plays an important role in the emergent stages of writing therefore children will be provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop sentences orally. This will be modelled effectively by EYFS practitioners promoting a language rich environment. Some words may be dictated to enable the children to practice the transcription they are taught.

The children will sometimes work in a focus group to practice specific skills with an adult with an explicit focus on handwriting lessons to teach correct pencil grip and letter formation. The whole school handwriting scheme Letter join will be used in addition to letter formation during phonic lessons.

To support writing in reception, it is therefore important to support children to develop:

- gross and fine motor skills to develop strength, coordination and positional awareness
- core strength, stability, balance and spatial awareness
- fine motor control and precision

The spelling of irregular common words should be correct, and they will be taught how to use word mats and working walls to aid their writing. Many of the Communication and Language and Physical

Development objectives further support effective writing. This may be to say and remember a sentence, considering finger spaces between words and punctuation such as a capital letter and full stop. **Although it is not essential for children to punctuate a sentence correctly to reach the writing Early Learning Goal, it is deemed as good practice and will support the foundational skills to support transition to the Key Stage One writing expectations.** They will record some work in their writing book and their self-initiated work may be added to their Busy Bee Book. Adults in the classroom will help the children to engage with their targets or next steps verbally and to begin to learn about the marking policy at Malvern Parish.

During phonics lessons, when children can, they begin to write words and sentences closely matched to their phonics lesson. This enables the children to apply and practise their recently learnt phonic knowledge and to be successful in their writing along with their reading. The children are introduced to the writing widgets that are used throughout school as a visual aid such as capital letters, finger spaces and full stops. These widgets are also used to inform writing assessment and inform next steps.

Mathematics

- Number
- Numerical Patterns

Number

The Early Learning Goal (ELG) states that children should be able to:

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number;
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5; - Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

Numerical Patterns

The Early Learning Goal (ELG) states that children should be able to:

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system; - Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.
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As the children make progress towards the Early Learning Goal, they have opportunities to demonstrate their mastery skills in a range of appropriate activities, both inside and outside of the classroom. They will learn some of the strategies found within the key stage 1 mastery curriculum such as the use of ten frames, part-part whole models and the representation of numbers in different ways. This will help them to develop a sound early understanding of the number system.

Adults, in all areas of the classroom, will model mathematical language and use questioning to deepen the children's understanding and enhance their learning. Some activities will be child initiated and others will be planned focus activities. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interest in mathematics, look for patterns and spot connections. Children will be encouraged to 'have a go' and talk about what they have noticed and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- The Natural World.

Through the variety of topics taught, the pupils build a range of knowledge and skills about their local community and the natural world around them. As we teach our Christian Values, the children will be sensitive to differences and curious as they learn how to take care of the world around them and each other. Families are encouraged to share their skills with reception class as we learn about each other; may this be culturally or to learn about different professions. We aim to visit local areas to provide a range of personal experiences to foster an understanding and increase their knowledge of the world around them, enriching vocabulary too. This area of learning is closely linked to our geography, history and science curriculum and leaders will observe the foundational skills and knowledge learnt and explored in our foundation stage classroom.

Expressive arts and design

- Creating with materials
- Being imaginative and expressive

The creation station and the role play areas in the classroom offer the opportunity for the children to develop skills such as using scissors and explore a range of materials to demonstrate their creativity and imagination. Role play also helps to develop their language skills and making relationships (PSED). The children are encouraged to choose their own resources and to share their creations, explaining the processes they have used. Our foundation subject leaders from art, design & technology and music will observe foundational skills in their area of learning.

Busy Bee Challenges

Each area of learning is incorporated into a variety of activities which the children are encouraged to complete. These are called The Busy Bee Challenges. These challenges are designed to encourage each child to access every area of the curriculum and therefore receive a broad and balanced educational experience. Many of the Early Years Foundation Stage subject areas have links to the foundation subjects in the National Curriculum, such as geography, history, art, design and technology, science and music. The Busy Bee challenges provide opportunities to make these links and develop relevant foundational skills with an emphasis on vocabulary.

When each challenge is completed, the children add the relevant sticker to their Busy Bee challenge card which can be taken home once it is full. This also gives the children the opportunity to develop as independent learners who can approach an activity with the enthusiasm and confidence to challenge themselves. There is a strong emphasis on learning through play, both pupil initiated and planned play. The curriculum is delivered through a combination of whole class activities, adult led focused activities and pupil-initiated activities.

Christian Values

At Malvern Parish, our vision is for all children to become aware of their God-given gifts so they can flourish as individuals, achieve academically and build firm foundations for the future. This vision is deeply rooted in strong Christian tradition and based upon:

“I come that they may have life and have it to the full”. John 10.10

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29.11

We seek to develop our vision through our Christian values of Friendship, Respect, Trust, Peace, Truthfulness and Forgiveness and live out these values in every part of school life, including our curriculum.

Assessment

We believe that assessment is a key element in the success of a child’s learning journey and is a crucial part of the planning and learning cycle. Observations are carried out in both planned and spontaneous contexts and are used to support the judgements of the children’s learning. Early Years practitioners use both formative and summative assessment to identify what children know and can do and what needs to be done next in order to move their learning forward.

In Reception it is a statutory requirement to assess each child against the Early Learning Goals (from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile). This happens at the end of the Reception year and the children will be assessed as being – Emerging (Working towards the Early Learning Goal) or Expected (Have achieved the Early Learning Goal)

Termly assessments are carried out to monitor children’s learning and progress. Adults use their knowledge of the children – informed by interactions, observations and formal assessments such as phonics data to complete the assessments. These are subsequently used to discuss children’s progress with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and will inform their next steps and seamless transition to KS1.

Parental Engagement

We value the contribution of parents and carers in their child’s life at Malvern Parish including their involvement in the assessment process. Staff are readily available at the end of each school day for questions and discussions. Parents are invited to share their child’s learning journey and development through sharing using Class Dojo’s. Parents also have consultations to review their child’s learning and progress. A written report is sent out to all parents and carers at the end of the Reception year. Throughout the year parents are invited to share ‘Wow moments’ and personal achievements. In addition, parents are invited to stay and play sessions along with curriculum workshops.

The Learning Environment

At Malvern Parish we allocate 30 children in each class. The Reception class has a teacher and a fulltime teaching assistant and is within the main school building. It has a free flow outdoor area and toilet facilities are located in the classroom.

The Early Years Foundation Stage learning environment at Malvern Parish C of E Primary School is designed around the developing needs of the children. The free flow arrangements enable children to make choices in the context for their learning and the environment is adapted to enable staff to respond to developing interests and themes.

The areas for learning inside the classroom have resources that are freely accessible and clearly labelled to enable children to develop independence skills. Display spaces are used to support children in consolidating their learning and to celebrate achievements.

Transitions

Establishing smooth and successful transitions into the Early Years Foundation Stage is fundamental at Malvern Parish. Successful transitions from a variety of pre-school settings are facilitated by:

- Induction and information evening where parents and carers can meet school staff.
- Providing induction information booklets to Reception parents and carers.
- Home visits to provide opportunity for the Reception class teacher and teaching assistant, the child and their families to meet in comfortable and familiar surroundings.
- School visits where children will become familiar with the Reception setting during the summer term prior to starting in Reception.
- Preschool/Nursery visits to liaise with previous settings.
- Visual support with pictures of staff and the classroom called a 'snack mat' to familiarise themselves with their new classroom.
- New families are invited to PTA events such as the PTA Summer Fair and a new parents tea and cake welcomes new parents to the school.

In addition to this, we ensure that the children transition from working on the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum to the National Curriculum in year one and beyond in a variety of ways:

- Joining with KS1 classes to rehearse for services such as Harvest and Easter; therefore, becoming increasingly familiar with classroom environments, teaching and support staff too.
- A consistent approach to literacy with Little Wandle Letters and Sound phonics lessons including a systematic lesson format, familiar support materials such as classroom displays of the grow the code chart and phoneme frieze, sound mats and tricky word mats, writing frames and reading squad.
- In the summer term, the children spend time accessing the Year 1 classroom during transition sessions along with a more formal move up session which is replicated in every year group.
- The children in reception class access whole school events such as daily collective worship, break times and lunchtime. The children spend time with older siblings and peers such as Playground Leaders from KS2. This whole school routines remain constant for the children.
- There are many examples of vocabulary and visual aids that build strong foundations for the National Curriculum with the aim to reduce cognitive overload such as our progressive approach to handwriting, vocabulary and resources to support White Rose Maths and links between the EYFS areas of learning and the discrete foundation subjects.
- Children will build greater levels of independence in their familiar environment of reception class in the summer term which will be replicated in Year 1 in the autumn term.

- To support the transition from a play based continuous provision approach, activities in the autumn term in Year 1 will be designed using subject specific practical resources alongside small focus group work with the class teacher.
- Relevant assessment data will be shared between class teachers with a detailed conversation outlining individual needs and any barriers to learning.

Role of the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader

It is the role of the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader under the guidance of the Head Teacher:

- To oversee and support the delivery of Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and to ensure progression and development.
- To keep abreast of developments within Early Years and carry out INSET when required.
- To moderate with the Early Years teacher to ensure continuity within assessment judgements made.
- To analyse assessment data to inform learning and teaching within the Early Years.
- Identify key areas for development – implement annual action plans, reviewing and evaluating progress and developments.

Jenny Lowndes March 2026

Author	Jenny Lowndes
Date	February 2026
Date ratified	March 2026
Review date	March 2029