

The Bellbird Primary School



Early Years Policy

May 2023

(To be reviewed May 2027)

‘Soaring to Success’

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

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. DfE March 2014

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, children join Reception on a phased introduction at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. The start of the school year is phased for all reception pupils. The school works on a 1:1 basis to discuss cases where this phased transition may need to be extended to ensure needs are met and a smooth transition is prioritised to meet need.

The EYFS curriculum is based upon four principles:

- 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers;
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

A Unique Child

At The Bellbird Primary School, we recognise that every child can be a competent learner who can develop skills to be resilient, capable and confident. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates and use the reception classroom environment and teachers planning to support these developments. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and from the start we nurture positive relationships and links with families. We use clear starting points, questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. We observe and assess individuals as they learn and use this information to plan future learning opportunities.

During their first year at school, the children are introduced to The Bellbird Primary School Aims. They are taught to:

Be yourself
Express yourself
Enjoy yourself
Challenge yourself
Work for each other
Look after yourself
Learn for life

Pupils are taught that they can ‘soar to success’.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued and listened to within our school. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and all children at The Bellbird Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. We do not group children based on notions of fixed ability. We teach the children that practice and effort lead to learning and improvement. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences and interests when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's existing knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence through a creative curriculum and stimulating learning environment
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is vital that all children in the school are safe. We provide children with opportunities to help them develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards both in the real and virtual world.

Positive Relationships

At The Bellbird Primary School we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We do this by:

- sending home welcome packs (or sharing them at our Summer term information meeting) with key information about the school and year group
- inviting the children to 'Stay and Play' sessions, with their teacher in the school hall and/or classroom before starting in Reception
- inviting all parents to an information meeting during the term before their child starts school where information is shared on how to ensure their child is 'reception ready'
- encouraging parents to attend consultation meetings in the first two terms to discuss their child's progress
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of Reception
- encouraging parents to contribute to their child's learning through simple tasks and through feedback
- sharing our approach to phonics, reading and maths through workshops
- offering an open door policy for parents to discuss any concerns with their child's class teacher

- sharing a newsletter and curriculum information about the school and the reception year group
- inviting parents into school for events where possible to work with or observe their child sharing their learning (Christmas play, mothers and fathers day events)

Staff quickly develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. Links with local preschools ensure key information is shared prior to the children beginning at school. The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss the new intake of children and their developments so far in line with the Early Years Outcomes.

Enabling Environments

At The Bellbird Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning provides opportunities for child initiated activities reflecting the topic where they can access the seven areas of learning. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

At The Bellbird, adult time is heavily focused on pupil interactions rather than observing and recording. We use a program called Tapestry to share information about learning. Tapestry is an online learning journal which is hosted in the UK on secure servers.

At parent's evening, parents have an opportunity to look through their child's book and celebrate their achievements. We value parents as partners in their child's learning and invite assessment from home sharing achievements.

At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. They are reported as being 'expected' or 'emerging'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report.

Parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning and the characteristics of effective learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress.

Learning and Development.

At The Bellbird Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

PRIME AREAS

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication & Language

SPECIFIC AREAS

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These areas are delivered throughout the topic and linked closely together. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

The EYFS classes have their own outdoor area, which is used all year round in all weathers. Being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together.

Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's personal, social and emotional development.

Through play our children explore and develop learning through experiences they are presented with, these experiences help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans, extending their ideas and thinking. Adults will set up learning for children to build on and develop. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

Transitions

The vast majority of children look forward to moving on in learning and in life, but for some children, transitions can be challenging. When transitions work well, children are assisted to develop confidence and acquire skills needed to manage future changes in their lives. Support from parents and staff at school can help transitions to be more successful.

Transitions from Reception to Year 1 are recognised as an important time in a child's life. Time is designated within the school calendar for sharing information about each child with their new receiving teacher. Each child's learning and social and emotional information is passed on to the new teacher so as to ensure continuity.

Where needed additional support such as transition books can be developed for children, which contain information about their new classroom environment and teacher etc. Vulnerable children are identified and additional transition work takes place to ensure their move is successful as necessary. In some very specific cases repetition of the reception year may be considered if it is felt to meet the learning and social needs of an individual as outlined in the DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook. This would always be discussed in collaboration with the parents of the child.