# The Bellbird Primary School



## Early Years Policy

## October 2026

## (To be reviewed October 2027)

**‘Soaring to Success’**

At The Bellbird Primary School, we give every child a safe, happy and ambitious start to school. Through warm relationships, purposeful play and carefully planned teaching, children develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need for Reception, Year 1 and beyond. Our CARE values underpin this provision.
This policy applies to the school’s Reception provision. It has been reviewed against the statutory EYFS framework for group and school-based providers effective from 1 September 2026. This revised draft is for school and governing-body consideration.

**Statutory Framework**
Our provision meets the Childcare Act 2006 and the EYFS Learning and Development Requirements Order 2007 and Welfare Requirements Regulations 2012, as amended. We have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and the SEND Code of Practice. Relevant duties also arise under the Education Act 2002, Children and Families Act 2014, Equality Act 2010, health and safety legislation, data protection law and the Prevent duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Non-statutory Development Matters may inform planning; it is not a statutory assessment checklist.

Children are entitled to a full-time Reception place from the September following their fourth birthday. We plan settling-in with families and respect parental rights to request part-time attendance or defer entry within the limits of the School Admissions Code. A phased start is not compulsory for all pupils. Any individual reduced timetable is exceptional, agreed, time-limited and regularly reviewed, with a clear plan to return to full-time education; it must not be used to manage behaviour or replace SEND support.

**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 with teaching and support from adults, responding to individual interests and needs, and a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers;
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

**A Unique Child**
We recognise each child as a capable learner who develops at their own pace. Staff build on children’s interests, experiences and starting points through responsive interactions, explicit teaching, modelling and purposeful play. They develop language, independence and confidence, identify barriers early and adapt teaching so that all children can participate and achieve.

**Our CARE values are taught and modelled in everyday learning and relationships:**
Curiosity – asking questions, noticing, exploring and investigating through play and conversation.
Ambition – having a go, practising, persevering and taking pride in growing independence and achievement.
Respect – listening, taking turns, valuing differences and caring for people, resources and the environment.
Empathy – noticing feelings, showing kindness and learning how our actions affect others.

**Through CARE, every child is supported to “soar to success”.**

**Inclusion**
All children and families are valued. We meet our duties under the Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and the public sector equality duty. We challenge discrimination and stereotypes and respect different cultures, beliefs, family circumstances and backgrounds. Children are not grouped by fixed notions of ability.

**We identify SEND early and work with parents/carers, the SENDCo and relevant professionals through assess, plan, do and review, having regard to the SEND Code of Practice. Support is based on need and is not delayed while awaiting a diagnosis. Children with an education, health and care plan receive the provision specified in it.**
Children learning English as an additional language, disadvantaged children and those facing other barriers receive responsive support and an ambitious curriculum. Intimate care, continence or communication needs do not prevent access to Reception. We seek children's views in ways they can understand and communicate.

**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
- adapting teaching, resources, communication, adult support and the environment to children's needs, including SEND
- 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 progress, reviewing the impact of support and seeking specialist advice when needed

Children learn to recognise feelings, seek help and manage appropriate risks through adult guidance and supervision. We teach safe relationships and online safety in an age-appropriate way. Responsibility for children's safety remains with adults.

**Positive Relationships**
Secure relationships help children become confident and independent. Each child has a named key person, normally their class teacher, whose identity and role are shared with parents/carers. The key person helps the child settle, understands their individual care and learning needs and supports the family to access additional help where needed.

**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 parents/carers to an information meeting before their child starts, sharing how we will support settling, communication, independence and learning
- 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 families to inclusive school events and opportunities to share their child's learning

Staff liaise with previous early years settings and families before entry, sharing relevant learning, SEND, medical and safeguarding information securely. They build on children's strengths and discuss how best to support settling and continuity. Safeguarding information is transferred through the appropriate confidential procedures.

**Enabling Environments**
The indoor and outdoor environment supports all seven areas of learning. Accessible, open-ended resources enable children to explore, create, communicate and develop independence. Staff plan both adult-led teaching and child-initiated learning, adapting the environment and support for individual needs.

**Observation, Assessment and Planning**
Ongoing assessment informs teaching and support through staff knowledge, day-to-day interactions and contributions from families. It must not interrupt interactions unnecessarily or generate excessive paperwork. Staff are not required to collect photographs or written evidence to prove every judgement. Early learning goals are end-of-Reception assessment points, not the curriculum or a checklist for daily teaching.

Adult time prioritises high-quality interaction and teaching. Tapestry supports selected learning updates and communication with families; it does not replace professional knowledge of the child. Access, images and information-sharing follow the school's privacy, data protection and acceptable-use procedures.

Parents/carers receive regular information about progress and can discuss achievements and concerns with the class teacher. They are encouraged to share learning and development at home.

The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment is administered within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception, following the framework's Annex B and current administration and access requirements. It is separate from our ongoing assessment and the EYFS Profile and is not used to label children or narrow the curriculum.

The EYFS Profile is completed by 30 June in the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches five, subject to the framework's exceptional arrangements. Teachers assess each of the 17 early learning goals as "expected" or "emerging", using professional judgement and reasonable adjustments where appropriate. Outcomes are shared with parents/carers, with an opportunity to discuss them, and submitted to the local authority as required. Year 1 teachers receive the Profile report and information about each child's learning and support needs.

**Learning and Development.**
We provide a broad, balanced curriculum across all seven areas, with particular attention to communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. Rich stories, explicit vocabulary, systematic phonics, early writing and mathematical learning build strong foundations alongside knowledge of the world and creative expression.

**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

All seven areas are interconnected and delivered through planned teaching, purposeful play and responsive adult interaction. Teaching supports the characteristics of effective teaching and learning: playing and exploring; active learning; and creating and thinking critically. For children learning English as an additional language, we value home languages, support English development and explore concerns about language with families before assuming a learning difficulty.

Children have daily opportunities for outdoor learning unless circumstances make this inappropriate. Staff assess weather, equipment and individual needs, and provide safe opportunities for physical activity, exploration, creativity and investigation.

**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.

Adults model language and skills, join play sensitively, extend ideas and teach new knowledge. Children practise, solve problems and learn to persevere with support. We balance child-initiated activity with direct teaching, increasing adult-guided learning as children develop and prepare for Year 1.

**Transitions**
We plan transitions with children, families and previous or receiving settings. Visits, familiar adults, clear routines and additional support help children manage change. Individual arrangements take account of SEND, medical needs, communication and emotional wellbeing.

Reception and Year 1 teachers share assessment, curriculum and support information and discuss each child's development. The Profile report and relevant safeguarding information are transferred appropriately so that learning and care continue smoothly.

Additional visits, visual information and transition books are provided where helpful. Remaining in EYFS beyond the normal year is exceptional and requires discussion and agreement with parents/carers, appropriate school/admission-authority decisions and liaison with the local authority about assessment. The EYFS framework's exceptional Profile arrangements are followed; repeating Reception is not an automatic response to low attainment or SEND.

**Safeguarding and Welfare**
This policy is implemented alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection, Staff Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing, Attendance, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Online Safety, SEND, Medical Conditions, Health and Safety, Intimate Care, Data Protection and Complaints procedures. These set out the detailed arrangements; the Headteacher ensures EYFS requirements are met and staff know how to act.

**Child Protection and Attendance**
A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and trained deputies provide advice and cover. All staff read Part One of KCSIE 2026 in full. EYFS practitioners and the DSL receive safeguarding training meeting Annex C of the framework, renewed at least every two years, with safeguarding updates at least annually and when needed. Staff know the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including child-on-child and online abuse, and report concerns immediately to the DSL or a deputy. Where a child is in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm, children's social care and/or the police are contacted without delay; anyone may make a referral.

Concerns about adults, including low-level concerns, follow the school's safeguarding reporting procedures. Allegations are reported to the Headteacher, or the Chair of Governors if about the Headteacher, with LADO involvement where required. Staff, students and volunteers can raise unsafe practice through whistleblowing procedures and external routes if concerns are not addressed. Information-sharing and record-keeping are timely, secure and proportionate.

Parents/carers must report absence promptly using the school's published Attendance Policy. Staff follow up unexplained or prolonged absence, contact parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts, and consider patterns, vulnerability and the family's circumstances. Where a child's safety is uncertain, staff seek children's social care advice and/or a police welfare check as appropriate. We keep daily attendance records and encourage regular attendance, including before compulsory school age.

**Suitable Staff and Supervision**
Recruitment, references, identity, qualification, DBS, barred-list and disqualification checks are completed where required under KCSIE and the EYFS. Staff receive induction, ongoing professional development and supervision that supports discussion of children's welfare, concerns and practice. Staff remain responsible for reporting changes affecting their suitability.

Staffing must meet children's needs throughout the day. Reception infant classes normally have no more than 30 pupils per school teacher during ordinary teaching sessions, subject to lawful exceptions; teaching assistants do not count as school teachers for that limit. Children are usually within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing. Staffing and supervision are adapted for SEND, activities, breaks and outings.

At least one person holding a current full paediatric first aid certificate is on the premises and available whenever children are present and accompanies children on outings. Certificates are renewed every three years. Staffing and the premises layout must enable a prompt response. Applicable qualification and first aid requirements are checked before staff are counted in ratios.

**Health Food and Medicines**
We obtain and update medical, dietary and emergency information with parents/carers. Where food is provided, it is healthy, balanced and nutritious. Fresh drinking water is available and accessible at all times. Food allergies and intolerances are shared with relevant staff and allergy action plans are agreed and kept current. Staff understand allergy and anaphylaxis risks and responses. Staff preparing or handling food receive food hygiene training, and food is prepared and served to minimise choking risks.

Children are always within sight and hearing of an adult while eating. A member of staff with a current full paediatric first aid certificate should always be in the room. At each meal and snack, responsibility for checking each child's food and dietary requirements is clear. Choking incidents requiring intervention are recorded and parents/carers informed.

Medicines are administered only with written parental permission for the particular medicine, following school procedures; each administration is recorded and parents/carers informed the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable. Prescription medicines must be prescribed for the child. Staff receive any necessary specialist training. Medicines are stored securely with timely access in emergencies. Infection-control procedures, hand hygiene and support for oral health are part of daily provision.

Accidents, injuries and first aid are recorded and parents/carers informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable. Serious incidents trigger the relevant safeguarding and statutory reporting procedures. The school checks which notifications apply to its registration status, including any required notification to local child protection agencies, Ofsted or the Health and Safety Executive.

**Behaviour and Intimate Care**
Staff model Respect and Empathy, teach routines and help children recognise feelings and regulate behaviour. Responses are appropriate to age, development and SEND. Corporal punishment, threats of corporal punishment and punishment that could negatively affect wellbeing are prohibited. Any physical intervention must be lawful, necessary and proportionate, follow school procedures and current guidance, and be recorded; parents/carers are informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Toileting and changing arrangements protect privacy, dignity and safety. Staff provide hygienic facilities, spare clothing and individual support agreed with families, taking account of disability and medical needs. Children are helped to become independent without shame, exclusion or withholding necessary care.

**Premises Outings and Safe Collection**
Premises, equipment and outdoor areas are checked for safety, security, cleanliness and accessibility. Risk assessments cover activities, visitors and outings, including staffing and first aid. Emergency evacuation procedures are practised. Children are released only to adults explicitly authorised by parents/carers, with identity checked where needed. Missing-child and uncollected-child procedures are followed immediately; children never leave unsupervised.

Any child needing sleep or rest is provided with a safe, suitable arrangement and appropriate supervision; the framework's safer-sleep requirements are followed where applicable. Banned dog breeds covered by section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 must not be present on the premises, including where an owner holds an exemption certificate. Smoking and vaping are not permitted around children.

**Online Safety and Screen Use**
We have regard to the DfE's Help for Early Years Providers guidance on screen use, as required from September 2026. Screen activities have a clear purpose, are age-appropriate and adult-supported, and are balanced with conversation, play, movement and real-world experiences. School filtering and monitoring arrangements support online safety. Personal phones, cameras, smart devices and image-taking are controlled through safeguarding and acceptable-use procedures; children's images are captured and shared only through authorised arrangements.

**Information Complaints and Review**
We maintain required child, parent/carer, emergency contact, attendance and care records. We seek more than two emergency contact numbers where possible. Personal information is processed lawfully and securely under the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and applicable Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 provisions. Families receive privacy information and access to relevant policies. Necessary safeguarding information-sharing is not delayed by seeking consent where consent is not the appropriate legal basis.

Parents/carers should raise concerns with the class teacher or EYFS lead and may use the published school Complaints Procedure, including its governing-body stage. Written complaints about EYFS requirements are investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days. Complaints and outcomes are recorded and made available to Ofsted on request. We provide families with Ofsted contact details if they believe EYFS requirements are not met, notify them of inspections and share the inspection report. Safeguarding concerns are raised immediately through safeguarding procedures. The Headteacher and EYFS lead monitor learning, inclusion, welfare and the impact of CARE values. Governors oversee implementation. This draft was reviewed on 30 October 2026; formal approval is to be recorded by the school. Review is due by October 2027, or sooner if requirements or provision change.

**Key Statutory Sources**
EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers — effective 1 September 2026

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

EYFS Profile handbook — updated September 2026

SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years

School Admissions Code 2021

Childcare Act 2006, section 40

EYFS Learning and Development Requirements Order 2007, as amended

EYFS Welfare Requirements Regulations 2012, as amended