

# **The Bellbird Primary School**



## **Early Years Policy**

**January 2021**

**(To be reviewed May 2023)**

## Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

- “Early Years Foundation Stage Profile”  
Department for Children, Schools and Families  
2012

## Principles

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, which is based upon 4 principles: **a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development.**

- **A unique child.** We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
- **Positive relationships.** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We use the school’s positive behaviour policy and are consistent in setting clear boundaries to help all children regulate their own behaviour.
- **Enabling environments.** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observations we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning. We ensure that children have opportunities to be outside all year round. The outdoors offers opportunities to doing things in different ways and on different scales than indoors. Practitioners support the children to take risks and explore.
- **Learning and development.** The Foundation Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

## **Curriculum**

The Reception children follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and forming relationships and thrive. These **3** areas support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the Prime Areas.

The Prime Areas are;

- Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- Physical Development – Moving and Handling and Health and Self care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making relationships, Managing feelings and Behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The specific areas are;

- Literacy – Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- Understanding the World – People and Communities, The World and Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and Using Media and Materials and Being Imaginative

We ensure that there is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Active learners need to have some independence and control over their learning. This will keep their interest and develop their creativity. We know that the evidence of attainment that comes from child-initiated activities is the most robust.

Our learning is linked to real-life skills as much as possible such as paying for snack each day using real coins. The children are taught in several different ways. Some sessions are whole class (e.g. phonics), some are small group (e.g. maths games/activities) and some are individual (e.g. name practise). The children also have independent tasks that they must complete each day.

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective learning. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate, experience things and ‘have a go’
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

### **Observation and assessment**

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, children’s achievements are tracked within their individual learning books and in their assessment files.

Additionally we use a program called Tapestry to track each child’s learning. Tapestry is an online learning journal which is hosted in the UK on secure servers. Each observation we make is linked into the children’s personal profile

These observations can include notes, photographs, EYFS assessments, characteristics of learning and videos. 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 in the form of ‘wow moments.’

At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either ‘emerging’, ‘expected’ or ‘exceeding’. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child’s end of year report.

In order to make a Good Level of Development (GLD) a child must reach the expected level in all of the Prime Areas as well as Reading, Writing, Numbers and Shape, Space and Measure.

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.

## **Transition**

All pre-school children have the opportunity to get to know all the practitioners in the Foundation Stage during 'getting to know you sessions' held in the summer term before admission to school.

At the end of the Foundation Stage, the children visit their new classrooms to get used to the environment. The Foundation Stage teachers also arrange to visit our feeder sessions in order to gather information about the incoming cohort.

The Foundation Stage Profile data is shared with Key Stage 1 colleagues in order that there is continuity and progression.

## **The role of parents**

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We aim to work collaboratively with parents by:

- Talking to parents about their child through an individual parent meeting as their child starts at The Bellbird.
- Giving opportunities for children to spend time with the teacher before they start school.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourages collaboration between child, school and parents.