




Early Years Policy

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Policy Sign off by (Print Name)	Barbara Robinson Chair of Governors	Signature:	
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The first year of school is a unique and special time in every child's life. This policy has been written to reflect upon Bramingham's philosophy in relation to the education and well-being of all Reception children. It provides a framework within which both teaching and non-teaching staff can operate and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment.

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1. Aims of Reception

At Bramingham Primary School, we value all children as unique individuals. We aim to create an environment:

- Where every individual, every achievement and every moment matters.
- Where all children feel safe, nurtured, valued and heard, so that they can play, explore, experiment, make decisions and take risks, whilst building on previous achievements and experiences.
- Where children can develop their natural curiosity, ask questions within a curriculum rich in opportunities, allowing them to follow their passions and experience new challenges.
- Where children are guided in their first steps towards a life-long love of learning, with high expectations for all
- Where establishing positive relationships and promoting independence, our youngest children can take risks and achieve the amazing.
- Where children learn to be kind, show concern and respect for others, whilst beginning to understand their place within the wider community.
- Where providing learning areas that are attractive, stimulating and well planned, all children are taught and challenged appropriately to develop their abilities to their full potential and develop a love of learning.
- Where everyone feels welcomed and valued and that by working in partnership with parents and carers we can contribute to the successful development of the whole child.
- Where through clear boundaries and routines, children will build confidence and resilience.
- Where balancing structured learning and purposeful play, children will be fluent readers, proficient writers, problem solvers and leaders of their own destiny.

2. Legislation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework, referenced whole school policies and the Early Years Risk Assessments.

3. Structure of the EYFS

Bramingham Primary school offers full time Reception places for up to 60 children each academic year. Bramingham provides two registration classes of 30 children with a dedicated class teacher and teaching assistants but operates as a whole unit for child-initiated learning.

4. Curriculum

During the Reception year the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework is followed; this was revised in 2021. The EYFS framework is a statutory requirement that lays out the standards the children in the early years should achieve. Assessments are made against it. Using the revised framework, a flexible curriculum was written for children living in our community. Our curriculum sets out how we implement experiences and activities for children and how we monitor their impact.

The Framework is organised into seven areas of learning and development. These are then split into three prime areas and four specific areas. Each of the areas has Early Learning Goals that children are expected to achieve by the end of their Reception year in school.

The three prime areas of learning are:

- **Communication and Language**

Children's ability to communicate underpins all areas of learning. Development of their spoken language is woven throughout the curriculum. As a team, we understand the importance of providing children with a language rich environment. To support communication and language development we read daily to children engaging them in a range of texts. Back and forth interactions are supported and modelled throughout the day, using children's interests, role play, stories and rhymes or commenting on what they are doing as a basis of conversation. Children have many opportunities to practise speaking and listening as they learn to communicate in different situations and for different purposes.

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)**

Personal development and supportive relationships are crucial for children to lead happy, healthy lives. We are a Values based school and we focus on a value each month. The children are provided with planned opportunities to express themselves, to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem as well as to practise and improve their self-help skills. We support children to manage and regulate their emotions. They learn how to make relationships, the difference between right and wrong, and to develop their sense of belonging and community. Children are also provided with opportunities to explore how their body works, manage personal needs and how to keep fit and healthy. This area is critical for success in other areas of learning.

- **Physical Development**

This area focuses on gross and fine motor experiences. Opportunities to improve the skills of co-ordination, control, core strength, balance and spatial awareness are provided to ensure children pursue active lives. The children will be offered daily opportunities to develop fine motor skills such as threading, mark making, cutting, using small tools and small world play. Precision and hand-eye co-ordination are linked to successful early writing.

The four specific areas of learning are:

- **Literacy**

We believe it is important for children to develop a love of reading that will last a lifetime. We provide children with '5 a day' literacy opportunities including focused story and rhyme time. Children are exposed to a wide range of quality reading material including poems and non-fiction. Core texts are learnt together, and activities developed around them. The children will be taught the preliminary skills necessary to develop their reading and writing abilities. These skills cover language comprehension and word reading. A systematic synthetic phonic approach, Essential Letters and Sounds, is used to teach skills for reading and spelling through a multi-sensory approach with a focus on sound discrimination and an awareness of rhythm and rhyme.

- **Mathematical Development**

The children will develop an understanding of maths and a grounding in number through stories, songs, games and imaginative play. They will experience practical activities relating to counting, sorting, matching, patterns, shapes, space and measures and have opportunities to use and experiment with numbers which will help them to become confident mathematicians.

- **Understanding of the World**

The children will be encouraged to use their curiosity and begin to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of their physical world and community. They will be encouraged to explore and ask questions as well as observe the seasonal changes in their environment. Stories, rhymes, and experiences help children to develop an understanding of the diverse cultural, social and technological aspects of our world. Children learn about and build with different materials and find out about past events in their lives.

- **Expressive Arts and Design**

Developing artistic and cultural awareness helps children to develop their creativity. Regular opportunities for children to explore colours, shapes, textures, and materials are provided. The children will experience and make music, develop their imagination, and express themselves through art, story, dance and imaginative play.

To support learning within all these areas the children are also provided with the following opportunities:

- **Library**

Stories form the basis of many of our topics and activities and the aim is to instil a love of books and reading to all the children. To promote this love, the children will have the opportunity to borrow books from the school library.

- **P.E.**

Physical development is ongoing throughout many of the Reception activities; however the children have a planned P.E. session once a week which takes place in the main school hall or outside, weather permitting. During these sessions the children explore how their body works, experience a variety of movement activities, including dance, gymnastics and climbing apparatus, and develop their skills with the small apparatus, such as balls, bean bags and quoits.

- **Music**

Many opportunities to join in songs, rhymes and musical activities are provided within the school day. Musical activities are planned to provide a developmentally structured learning experience, including learning, and singing action songs and rhymes, music and movement and an introduction to percussion instruments.

- **Technology**

The children have access to a range of electronic devices for example, iPads, interactive white board,

Beebots and Kidizoom camera . The children learn how to use these devices and practise using these for their own interest and purpose.

- **Assembly**

The children attend selected assemblies with Key Stage One or Whole School. During the Spring Term, or when the children are deemed to be ready, the children attend the celebration assembly every Friday.

4.1 Planning

Our Early Years curriculum creates an overarching cycle of learning in line with statutory requirements. This shows the progression of subject sequences for PSED, phonics, maths, music, P.E, Talk for Writing, reading spine and core texts. Our curriculum shows the sequences of learning for our Reception curricular goals of:

- To make a model at the woodwork table, working towards curriculum ambition, collaborating with a peer or on their own to make something from reclaimed materials.
- To follow a recipe, working towards curriculum ambition, enjoy creating a baked item with friends or independently that they can eat.
- To be able to perform to an audience, working towards curriculum ambition, enjoy expressing themselves through music and dance, creating a performance.
- To engage in a two-way conversation, working towards curriculum ambition, enjoy speaking to peers or familiar adults to express feelings, ideas or explanations.

The Early Years teachers use the curriculum to plan stimulating and exciting activities that follow children's interest around open-ended half termly questions. Plans are developed throughout the half term considering the children's interests, needs, ideas and stage of development. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff liaise with the SENCo who will consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

Short term planning is completed on a weekly basis, following discussion with the children where they are encouraged to reflect on their learning so far and to share their interests and the questions they would like to explore and investigate in the coming week. Additional enhanced provision is provided for child-initiated learning around their chosen theme, line of enquiry, interests, and developmental need. Elements of planning remains flexible so that it can be responsive to the children's needs and wants.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As the year progresses and as children's 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

At Bramingham, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Baseline Assessment

During the first half term the Early Years team will make assessments and observations about the children's abilities and needs using the Early Years Foundation Stage profile. The assessment covers all seven areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and provides a baseline for future observations and assessments. In addition to our own internal assessment, class teachers carry out the government Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) with all children in their first 6 weeks of attending school.

Assessment Checkpoints

Each child is individually assessed by the Early Years team at key checkpoints throughout the academic year to check children are on track to meet their Early Learning Goals. The first key check is at the baseline and then at Christmas, Easter and by the end of June. At this final checkpoint every child is assessed against all the Early Years Learning Goals and their progress from the baseline assessment at the start of the year is tracked. These judgements form the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) which is shared with parents/carers. The profile is moderated internally and where possible in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Day to day Assessments

Daily formal and informal assessments are made of the children during adult led as well as child-initiated activities. Staff use their knowledge of the children to use in the moment observation and assessment to move on children's learning and develop skills taught.

Phonics Assessments

Assessments are conducted at the end of each half term in line with the school's synthetic systematic programme - Essential Letters and Sounds to ensure all children keep on track. These assessments support daily observations and assessments made during teacher activities.

Assessed Writing

Every child completes a half termly assessed writing activity.

Reading Skills

Regular recording of individual reading sessions with the class teacher or teaching assistant are made.

Learning Journals

Learning Journals are kept for every child. Learning Journals are used to keep observations of children's new learning or milestones for all 7 areas of the EYFS. Evidence is collected for core maths skills and mark making/writing. Evidence is also collected of 'wow' moments and celebrations from home. Journals include notes, observations, photographs, and children's work. The Learning Journal helps staff to reflect on each child's progress over time and helps to identify any concerns about a child's development at the earliest opportunity. Children have access to their Learning Journals and contribute to them. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's Journal and opportunities are built in for parents to view them.

Moderation

Assessment judgements are moderated internally at each assessment checkpoint. Early Years teachers make use of moderation opportunities in local schools through the Luton Schools Support Service to ensure a consistent approach to judgements are made.

Characteristics of Learning assessment

There are also three categories of Characteristics of Learning that the children are also assessed against on a regular basis. These are:

- **Playing and Exploring (engagement)** – curiosity and exploring the world and engaging in open ended play, having a can-do attitude
- **Active Learning (motivation)**- being able to focus, being resilient and being proud of their achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically (thinking)** – having ideas, solving problems, testing ideas, reviewing their approach.

Formal reporting of assessments is made during parent consultations twice a year and in a written end of year report.

All assessments are provided to Year 1 teachers at the end of the year to aid transition arrangements.

6. Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities as well as their strengths and areas for development.

We feel it important for the children, practitioner, and parents to develop relationships before assigning a key person. The role of the key person is to strengthen the relationship between school and home as well as to nurture a bond between the key person and child. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate. In most cases, the key person will be the child's class teacher but there may be situations where another Early Years team member takes on the role for a specific child or children.

6.1 Admission Arrangements

During summer term children are invited to attend Stay and Play sessions to help them familiarise themselves with the school environment. During this time, the Early Years staff endeavour to visit children in their nursery settings and conduct home visits. Welcome packs are provided for each family containing information about Bramingham and a transition booklet with photographs of the Early Years staff and Reception setting. There is a welcome meeting for parents, where we share our school vision, values, Early Years curriculum and expectations.

All pupils are admitted to the Reception class in September. The children transition through a gradual staggered approach, all starting on either a morning or afternoon basis which is increased to include lunch and then to staying for full days by the end of the second week. Individual arrangements can be made in certain circumstances depending on the needs of the child.

6.2 Daily Routine

The classroom door opens at 8.45am where children are greeted by a member of staff. Children complete a range of fine motor activities and vote for the 'Story of the Day'. The rest of the day is planned against a timetable with a blend of adult led and child-initiated activities. During adult led time, the children are taught key

skills, concepts, and knowledge. These sessions are delivered in small groups, or whole class, and are pitched and paced appropriately for all individuals. During Child Initiated Learning (Busy Time), children have the opportunity to plan and review their own learning through play using both the indoor and outdoor environment.

6.3 Partnership with Parents

Establishing a positive relationship with parents is essential. We aim to do this in several ways:

- Encouraging a visit to/ tour of the school with the Co-Headteachers and Reception teachers prior to seeking admission
- Offering an induction evening for all new parents where the Early Years team explain routines and philosophy
- Offering “Stay and Play” sessions for parents and new starters during the Summer Term
- Regular provision of a school newsletter and e-mail communications as required
- Having an open-door policy
- Making sure the Early Years team share any concerns at the earliest opportunity
- Encouraging parents to add to their child’s Learning Journal
- Providing regular opportunities for parents to view their child’s Learning Journal
- Conducting parents’ evenings twice a year and providing an end of year report
- Providing copies of half termly ‘parent view’ curriculum maps
- Using teachers2parents to communicate with parents
- Providing workshops for parents on different aspects of the curriculum such as reading, phonics, maths etc
- Having a Key Worker assigned to every child
- Conducting home visits before the children start school
- Inviting parents to join in with activities for example, school trips and theme afternoons

7. Safeguarding and welfare

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Bramingham works in partnership with parents to support children in every way possible. Schools have a clear responsibility to ensure that they work together with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. These responsibilities are set out in the statutory guidance from the government, Keeping Children Safe in Education. As a result, if concerns are raised about a child’s welfare, the school’s Designated Safeguarding lead would be informed and will act upon this.

Following statutory guidance we promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years through direct teaching and by talking to children about the effects of eating too many sweet things and the importance of brushing your teeth.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy

8. Positive Behaviour

The emphasis within Reception and the wider school is to create a caring and safe environment for everyone in line with the whole school Behaviour Policy. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learn to recognise its impact on other members of the community. All members of the Early Years team set an example of caring behaviour and respect for others which will be perceived and followed by the children.



9. Inclusion

Every child at Bramingham has the right to equal access to the curriculum and to be treated with courtesy, care, and respect. The aim is to ensure that everyone understands and respects backgrounds, abilities, religion, and cultures that might be different from their own. The children are taught to look at people's common needs and how people and cultures can work creatively together. Many children make positive contributions by sharing their own personal experiences. Class discussions are enriched by such contributions, and it develops self-esteem, a sense of pride and mutual respect.

10. Special Educational Needs

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. All staff are alert to any emerging difficulties a child may be having and aim to respond early to these concerns. Each child has the right to develop alongside their peers no matter what their individual needs and staff work to ensure any necessary provision is provided. In these instances, further assessment and consultation with parents or outside agencies is undertaken by the Early Years teachers and SENCO. The school aims to recognise, support and develop every child's abilities.

The rest of our Special educational needs procedures are outlined in our whole school policy.

11. Queries and Complaints

It is important that the partnership between parents and Bramingham School is a happy one. If at any time there is a concern, parents are strongly encouraged to discuss this with either the Early Years teachers in the first instance, then the Early Years manager and then the Senior Leadership team.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by Sarah Miles as Early Years manager and approved by the Senior Leadership team.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

