

BLEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL



EYFS POLICY

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BLEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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Our Vision

At Blean Primary School we aim to provide every child with the skills to become a happy, independent and curious lifelong learner. Our priority is that our provision provides a high level of engagement and active learning through a range of skill-based activities. Our Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum nurtures, engages, motivates and captures children's interest and learning. The breadth of our curriculum and how it is based on accurate assessment of children's learning and development is key to our children's early success. The quality of phonic teaching and early maths teaching, quality of engagement with parents and the extent to which our youngest children 'enjoy and engage' in the first steps of their learning journey are key to their individual successes.

Our Principles

At Blean Primary School we strive to meet every child's entitlement to develop a love of learning that will enable them to have the best possible future life chances.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage states four guiding principles which shape our practice in the Reception year. These are:

- 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, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates.
(Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five, Nov 2024)

Our Aims

- To consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in our care.
- To use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.
- To greatly enhance each child's health, safety and well-being through the vigilant and consistent implementation of our robust Safeguarding policy and procedures.
- To provide an organised and highly stimulating physical environment inside and outside with rich, imaginative and varied resources.
- To provide a secure and caring emotional environment that enables each child to become a confident, motivated and happy learner.
- To provide an intellectual environment where practitioners and children 'work together' to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities or extend a narrative.
- To provide consistently high quality and inspirational teaching that is highly responsive to the children's needs.
- To plan provision across all areas meticulously and in response to the children's interests.
- To involve parents/carers in their child's learning and development, and the assessment of their child.
- To use accurate, rigorous and sharply focused assessment of the children's achievements so that every child undertakes highly challenging activities.
- To highly motivate all children, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged children and the most able, to make substantial and sustained progress in relation to their starting points.
- To provide opportunities for children whose home language is not English to develop and use their home language in play and learning.
- To foster independence and individuality.
- To foster a very good understanding of how to keep safe, manage risks and demonstrate high levels of self-control, cooperation and respect for others.
- To effectively prepare each child for their transition to Key Stage One.

Learning and Development

Learning and development is categorised into seven equal and interconnected areas of learning. The three prime areas of learning are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The four specific areas of learning strengthen and apply the prime areas.

The prime areas of learning:

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

The specific areas of learning:

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

In planning and guiding what children learn, we reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. We ensure we incorporate the children's development in the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning through everything we do. These are:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

Playing and Exploring

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn 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. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express emotions and experiences in controlled and safe situations. We deliver learning for all of the areas through, purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. We support children to move thinking and learning to the next level through questions, role modelling and sustained, shared thinking.

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Our children are given an opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through expressive arts and design activities. Our practitioners support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. They support each child to view challenging problems as tasks to be mastered, develop a deeper interest in the activities they are involved in, recover quickly from setbacks and disappointments and to have a strong sense of commitment to their interests and activities.

These characteristics of learning are an integral part of the three prime and four specific areas of learning, and describe the attitudes, skills, and approaches to learning which we endeavor to nurture in the Reception year. They also support the EYFS unit in underpinning our Blean School Values which produce opportunities for every child to learn, demonstrate and practice lifelong learning attributes. These five values are:

- **Responsibility**
- **Resourcefulness**
- **Resilience**
- **Curiosity**
- **Collaboration**

Our EYFS Curriculum

Achieving an effective balance between child-initiated and adult-directed approaches, and differentiating these for children's level of development, is crucially important for effective teaching and good outcomes. We plan provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. We encourage our children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence.

We have a commitment to ensuring that the prime areas of learning and development are taught effectively, and provide high quality, focused Mathematics, Literacy and Phonics sessions as part of the daily routine. The EYFS curriculum informs and validates our aspirations for our youngest learners, and we:

- make language a priority, embedding spoken language, vocabulary development and listening comprehension into all aspects of their work,
- teach reading in a systematic and structured way, building up children's phonic knowledge and skills explicitly,
- provide regular story times where children can be taught to understand what they have heard,
- teach writing composition by building on children's spoken language and their comprehension of stories,
- teach spelling and handwriting directly,

- deepen children's understanding of core mathematical concepts rather than moving them on too quickly to formal calculations and written algorithms,
- secure children's personal, social and emotional readiness to learn, including resilience, perseverance, concentration, the ability to listen, to take turns and to cooperate.

We understand Early Years Foundation Stage pedagogy and practice, and its uniqueness within a school environment. We recognise the key features of effective teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage to be:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have, of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum and learning environment that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals.

The Enabling Environment

Our rich and varied environment plays a key role in supporting and extending our children's development and learning. It gives them confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces. Our environment gives all children the opportunity to make independent choices; and this enables our practitioners to observe what interests each child and begin to develop the language that will support these activities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are strategically organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative, investigative or imaginative. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. This is our established, 'Root Learning' provision and it is accessed by the children on a daily basis. Our 'Root Learning' provision provides a balance between child initiated and adult-directed activities and is used effectively in supporting the children's skills and knowledge to develop. Our resources positively reflect the children's cultural and linguistic identity and experiences. We have an extensive, enclosed outdoor area, and our children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. Resources both inside and outside enable the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

Assessment

Through observation, we assess and gather information about the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. The Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL) are integral to our assessment and accountability systems. We assess additional aspects including phonics, knowledge of key words, and reading fluency and use this information as a support for learning and teaching and in order to demonstrate children's progress.

We use the system 'Tapestry' to share photos and observations of special moments on each child for their parents/carers and they are encouraged to share achievements and observations from home.

At the end of the Reception year, each child's level of development is recorded against the seventeen Early Learning Goals. Our Early Years Foundation Stage practitioners meet with local schools to moderate their high-quality evidence of the children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile. They secure the accuracy of their assessments through professional conversations, observations and pupil's work, and engage in year group moderation and whole school moderation exercises frequently throughout the year.

Inclusion

We greatly value the diversity of individuals within our school. All children and families at Blean Primary School are valued and treated fairly whatever their race, gender, religion or abilities. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by involving children in the planning of their learning and considering our children's range of life experiences.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children. We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence,
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs,
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate, inspire and support children and to help them to learn effectively,
- Providing a safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued,
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping,
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills,
- Monitoring children's progress and acting to provide additional support where necessary to close the gap.

Supporting children learning English as an additional language

There are increasing numbers of children entering our Early Years Foundation Stage setting for whom English is not the dominant language in the home. For our children whose home language is not English, we provide opportunities to support their home language development and to reach a good standard in English during the Early Years Foundation Stage. When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, we are required to assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, we explore the child's skills in their home language with their parents/carers. Home language skills are transferable to new languages and strengthen children's understanding of language use. The best outcome is for our children and their families to have the opportunity to become truly bilingual with all the advantages this can bring.

We value that all of our children and their families are unique. Our practitioners effectively consider circumstances that may be unfamiliar for each child, and take great care not to make assumptions about them due to their linguistic, cultural, social or ethnic background. Our children with EAL are not a homogenous group, and their needs are individual at all stages and ages. We work closely with parents/carers to share information about all aspects of their child's development.

Our inclusive attitude, ethos, and understanding that bilingualism is an asset, supports our children learning English to thrive. There are specific skills that we teach effectively through scaffolding, modelling and planned interventions following observations to assess need. Our children learn to be strong and independent from a base of warm and secure relationships with practitioners, and their respectful acknowledgement of the feelings of the children and their families.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Our children's health, safety and well-being are greatly important to us. Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We have a robust Safeguarding Policy (see Safeguarding Policy) and are vigilant and consistent in implementing these procedures.

We educate our children on reasonable boundaries, rules and limits and help them to understand why they exist. We provide our children with choices to help them to develop this important life skill and encourage safety without stopping reasonable risk-taking. We teach our children to recognise and avoid hazards, and encourage them to take responsibility and to join in by helping with manageable tasks that interest them.

We foster the physical, mental and emotional well-being of every child while recognising and meeting children's needs to belong and be part of a group. Making friends and getting on with others helps children to feel positive about themselves and others.

We maintain children's healthy interest in their own bodies, their own well-being and food preferences, while helping them to understand why some choices are healthier than others. Our environment supports children's choices to be active or to rest. There are quiet places or dens where children can relax and interesting, large spaces for vigorous free movement.

We are legally required to comply with the 'Safeguarding and Welfare requirements' as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (2024).

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children,
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill,
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs,
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so,
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs,
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of our EYFS Unit to meet the needs of the children,
- Provide staff with continual CPD, including yearly safeguarding training.
- Ensure at least one member of staff in the EYFS unit has a 'Pediatric First Aid' qualification and that a PFA adult is on all outings outside of school.
- Ensure all pupils are allocated a 'key person' on entry to the setting and this information is shared with parents.

Behaviour

In the EYFS we promote our Blean school rules of:

- **Be Ready**
- **Be Respectful**
- **Be Safe**

Alongside our strong PSED curriculum which enables our pupils to develop a strong sense of self-worth, understand their own and other's emotions, self-regulate and develop appropriate social skills enabling them to be part of a class and wider society. We also ensure our teaching and modelling is conclusive in supporting a child in developing a good standard of behavior in which they can enjoy and achieve.

Transition to Blean Primary School

The effective induction into the culture and ethos of our Early Years Foundation Stage, its expectations and routines, is critical in ensuring that our children establish confidence and familiarity with the learning environment to support high quality learning and development. This development of familiarity and confidence is prioritised within our transition process. Our support for children with Additional Needs/SEND is effective because procedures are in place to identify specific needs prior to entry to our setting. This early identification begins at parent/carer's first tours of the setting, and involves the EYFS lead and Inclusion Manager collecting a holistic picture of individual children. The EYFS lead and Inclusion Manager work closely together to gather assessments or indications of a child's level of development, and use their positive relationships and communication with our local nurseries and pre-schools to prepare and respond to individual children's emerging needs.

We view the transition to our setting to be a continuous process throughout the Reception year, rather than a single event. The specific characteristics of our transition process into Blean Primary School include:

- starting quickly, from the first week of the new academic year,
- building on children's learning from the end of nursery and/or pre-school,
- instilling a day-to-day routine so that children feel safe, secure and happy,
- developing children's confidence, concentration and ability to listen and follow instructions,
- securing the essential skills of reading, writing and mathematics, as the gatekeepers for successful learning across all other subjects,
- forging effective working relationships with parents/carers,
- connecting to the wider school community through participating in whole-school events and celebrations, setting the rules and expectations early on for behaviour in the school as a whole,
- preparing children for the demands of Year 1 through a transition process.
- generating a love of learning and an enjoyment of school.

Transition to Key Stage One

We believe that due to the age of the children and their developmental phase, aspects of our Early Years Foundation Stage pedagogy should continue in Year 1. Our Year 1 practitioners have experience of and plan thematically for the use of the Prime Areas and Characteristics of Effective Learning to support improved outcomes in Key Stage One.

Our EYFS and Year 1 practitioners have transparent and professional relationships, share CPD opportunities and review their pedagogical approaches throughout the year. They attend the statutory moderation for the EYFS profile in the Summer term together, and observe each other's pedagogical approaches in practice for continuity. Opportunities for communication between staff, children, parents/carers and governors are facilitated frequently, and the process of change takes place gradually over time. Our EYFS and Year 1 practitioners have a deep understanding of the commonalities between the Early Years Foundation Stage and the

KS1 curriculum and effective relationships with our children's parents/carers are carefully maintained.

Where a child's learning and development did not meet what was expected at the end of EYFS, then the learning and development is said to be at the emerging level for that ELG. For our children who are emerging the Early Learning Goals at the beginning of Key Stage One, our extensive and nurturing transition process is especially permeant.

Our Year 1 curriculum is rich and challenging for all children working both towards and beyond the ELGs, and is planned around playful, enticing, enquiry-based experiences.

Working in Partnership

At Blean Primary School we recognise parents/carers as their children's first and most enduring educators. We value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Recognising that they have a large amount of knowledge about their child which they may be happy to share,
- Talking to them about their child before their child starts at our setting either through a home visit, or through an informal meeting at school,
- Offering the opportunity to spend time in the Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms with their child before starting school at our Stay and Play sessions,
- Providing a flexible transition arrangement in September, using their knowledge of their child's personal, social and emotional development to plan a tailored approach to starting school,
- Operating an open-door policy and giving them our full attention, being empathetic in acknowledging the way they may be feeling or emotions they may be showing in their interactions,
- Asking about their child's views and taking these into account in discussions and decisions,
- Involving them in their child's setting, arranging Parent Shares, trips or stay and play sessions,
- Actively informing them of our planned teaching and learning through a termly Curriculum Overview and information shared on the school website or through GoogleClassrooms.
- Delivering Early Years Foundation Stage skill-based workshops (Tea and Topic sessions) to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school and make it easier to emulate them at home,
- Seeking to engage them in guiding their child's development at home, through Tea and Topic sessions and parents' consultations.
- Encouraging them to visit the setting on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning,
- Encouraging them to contribute their insights to the assessment and planning of their child by contributing to 'Tapestry'
- Valuing their contributions to 'Tapestry' by offering feedbacks and comments through replies on their child's account,

- Encouraging them to think about the outcomes which are important for their child at two parent/teacher consultation evenings per year,
- Helping families to engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

The Reception Team

Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) practitioners in Reception, led by the EYFS lead are a highly efficient and self-improving team. They meet weekly to collaborate, share and extend possible outcomes for the children, and participate in regular CPD opportunities delivered by the EYFS lead based on their self-evaluations, feedback from monitoring and their observations of the children. The Reception Team participate in action research, which they strive to use to make positive changes to improve the Early Years practice.

Online Safety in the Early Years

The internet and other digital and information technologies are beneficial tools to all children's learning and we support our children to be aware of how to use these tools appropriately and safely. All staff at Blean Primary School are fully aware and trained in the importance of online safety and how to use technology safely themselves and with the children. Our Online Safety Policy (see Online Safety Policy) and Acceptable Use Policy (see Acceptable Use Policy) specifies how we endeavour to ensure all children and staff benefit from the use of the internet and information technology and the precautions that are in place to safeguard them from it. We recognise that children's opportunities for using the internet within their homes is increasing rapidly and that unless parents are made aware of the dangers, their child may have unrestricted access to the internet. We help our parents/carers to plan and understand appropriate supervised use of the internet at home through, whole school newsletters and online safety events, as well as asking them to read and sign the acceptable use policy for parents.

Monitoring and Review

The Head teacher, SLT and EYFS lead alongside other subject leaders are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of Early Years provision and learning through lesson observations, learning walks, book sharing, data analysis and discussion of individual children's learning journey's as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. This information is used to inform teaching and learning, staff training and development and the School Improvement Plan.