



BLETCHINGLEY VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the academic year in which they have their fifth birthday. This policy is based on requirements set out in the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)' (September 2021). At Bletchingley, we believe that effective provision in the EYFS is essential, as it builds the foundations and prepares children for future success.

Summary:

We follow the requirements set out in the '[Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)', developing our curriculum around the seven areas of learning and development.

Our daily timetable is structured with a mix of whole class and small group teaching, as well as extended time for learning through play. During play, children practise skills and build upon and revisit prior learning. Adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Our learning environment is carefully planned to develop independence and resourcefulness. Our continuous provision is organised and accessible for all, to encourage exploratory play-based learning and challenge.

Outdoor learning is an integral part of our daily routine in our EYFS. We encourage children to have all-weather clothing in school at all times and provide this as necessary.

We carefully plan transitions for children starting at our setting and for those transitioning from Early Years into Key Stage One. We build effective partnerships with local nurseries, external agencies and parents to support us with effective transition. We provide a mix of nursery/ home visits, settling in/ induction sessions, story times and stay and play sessions and cross key stage moderation with school staff to facilitate this.

School context

At Bletchingley Village Primary School, there are two Nursery classes which share our Nursery classroom- Rabbit (two-year-olds) and Badger (three- and four-year-olds). Children in Nursery can attend on a part time or full- time basis- we offer Funded Early Education for two year olds (FEET), as well as 15- and 30-hour places. In addition, we have one Reception class- Otter class, with a cohort of 30 children, plus additional SLCN places too. Each classroom has an attached outdoor space.

EYFS Vision/ Aims

At Bletchingley, we are committed to ensure that every child has the opportunity to experience the very best possible start to their education. We aim to provide high quality, meaningful, broad and balanced learning opportunities that meet the needs and interests of our children, in a context relevant to them, as unique individuals who learn in different ways and at different rates. Our holistic approach will provide children with the knowledge, skills and abilities to make sense of their world- encouraging a love of learning, so all children can reach their potential and become successful, confident lifelong learners.

We aim to achieve this through:

- ✓ Setting high expectations and celebrating all successes, to ensure that everyone is challenged and supported to achieve their very best.
- ✓ Having an evolving, stimulating, broad and balanced curriculum, which responds to the needs and interests of all learners.
- ✓ Focusing on the characteristics of effective learning, in order to create lifelong learners, who are fully equipped for our rapidly changing world.
- ✓ Having a values-led learning approach, so everybody feels secure and has a strong sense of self, so they are confident to explore and take risks.
- ✓ Providing a balance of open ended activities, focused learning, high quality interactions and child-initiated play, in order to nurture, scaffold and develop the children's independence.
- ✓ Working closely with parents/carers and other multi-agency professionals, to ensure all children get the necessary support to help them reach their full potential.
- ✓ Ensuring practitioners have accurate knowledge and understanding of child development, attainment and next steps in learning.

EYFS Principles

The Statutory Framework is based on four guiding principles, and these help us to shape our practice in the Early Years at Bletchingley:

- ✓ **A Unique Child:** We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- ✓ **Positive Relationships:** We recognise that children learn to be strong, independent, and resilient when they experience secure and nurturing relationships. These positive relationships are developed by building mutual trust and respect, which in turn supports children to have the courage to try something new and then reflect and learn from their mistake.
- ✓ **Enabling Environments:** We understand that 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. We value the support of parents/ carers and endeavour to build strong partnerships between home life and school life.
- ✓ **Learning and Development:** We know that children develop and learn in individual ways, at different rates and at Bletchingley, we get to know our children and their starting points and set high expectations for all.

EYFS Curriculum

Our EYFS curriculum is developed in accordance with the latest version of the 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'. The EYFS framework outlines seven areas of learning and development that are important and interconnected- three 'prime areas' and four 'specific areas'. At Bletchingley, all areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

The 'prime areas' are particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. They are:

- ✓ Communication and Language (*Listening, Attention and Understanding, and Speaking*).
- ✓ Personal, Social and Emotional Development (*Self-Regulation, Managing Self, and Building Relationships*).
- ✓ Physical Development (*Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills*).

The Four 'specific areas' included essential skills and knowledge and allow opportunities for the prime areas to be strengthened and applied. They are:

- ✓ Literacy (*Comprehension, Word Reading, and Writing*).
- ✓ Mathematics (*Number, and Numerical Patterns*).
- ✓ Understanding the World (*Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities, and The Natural World*).
- ✓ Expressive Arts and Design (*Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive*).

Characteristics of Effective Learning

At Bletchingley, we ensure that all activities and learning are informed by the children's interests and next steps. We know that children learn in different ways and that the 'Characteristic of Effective Learning' underpin all aspects of how a child learns.

The three characteristics of effective learning are:

- ✓ Playing and exploring - pupils investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- ✓ Active learning - pupils concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy and celebrate achievements.
- ✓ Creating and thinking critically - pupils develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Early Learning Goals

The Early Learning Goals are the knowledge, skills and understanding which young pupils should have acquired by the time they reach the age of five. They are statutory and outline the expectations for most pupils to reach by the end of the EYFS. Our curriculum is planned to ensure progression and continuity of skills in all the seven areas of learning. It is broad and balanced, as we know that these areas of learning are dependent on each other, to support effective early years development.

At the end of the Reception year, parents are informed of whether their child has achieved these Early Learning Goals- this is shared in their end of summer term report. To ensure smooth transition out of the EYFS, teachers communicate with the Year One teachers, whether individual children have achieved/ not achieved the Early Learning Goals and if they have achieved- whether they just achieved, whether they are working solidly within the Early Learning Goals, or whether they are working at greater depth.

Learning in the Early Years at Bletchingley

Planning

"The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything the early years setting wants the children to learn" (*Development Matters- Seven features of effective practice 2023*). Our Early Years curriculum at Bletchingley, is based around cross-curricular topics. These are outlined on our long term planning documents, to ensure progression and coverage of knowledge and skills across the seven areas of learning, all the way from our 2 year olds until the end of Reception. Topics are carefully considered to ensure the curriculum is broad and balanced and prepares the children for the National Curriculum in Key Stage One. For example, to prepare children for their Year One science learning on animals- we introduce them to

different animal groups throughout the year, such as when we explore Nocturnal and Diurnal animals during our learning about the story Owl Babies. We also teach children about the different body parts, when we learn about our senses and learn songs such as Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes. We value the importance of reading at Bletchingley, therefore high quality stories and non-fiction texts, help us to introduce and explore our chosen topics.

Our weekly planning is expanded from our medium term planning, which is completed half termly and based on our long term overview. We focus on delivering the curriculum through purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. It is essential that learning is planned around the children's current needs and interests and is evaluated and adapted on an on-going basis. We use our overarching topics to expose children to new knowledge and areas of interest, but also ensure that their own current interests are woven into our teaching to maximise enthusiasm for learning. We use regular formative assessment, to ensure that we are building on and extending pupil's knowledge, experiences, interests and skills. Our school values are introduced in the Early Years and underpin our whole curriculum. Through these values, we develop both class and school rules and quickly establish boundaries so children are ready to learn.

Structure of the day

At Bletchingley, we aim to quickly introduce children to our regular day-to-day routine, so that they can feel safe and secure in their learning environment. Throughout the Early Years, our daily timetable is structured with a mix of whole class and small group teaching, as well as extended time for learning through play.

Learning through play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We know that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. During play, children can practise skills and build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to communicate, adapt, negotiate, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Our learning environment

Our learning environments, both inside and outside, are carefully planned for and continuously developed to encourage exploratory play-based learning and challenge. We aim for children to become independent and resourceful in their learning. We support this through our continuous provision, which is organised and accessible for all, so children can access resources without needing adult support and can create their own learning opportunities. Alongside our continuous provision, we plan and provide enhancements- these may focus on our current topic and provide opportunities for children to practise and embed new skills and knowledge. Our continuous provision builds and develops as the children move through Nursery and into Reception and resources are carefully considered to ensure progression.

We value outdoor learning as an intrinsic part of the curriculum throughout a child's school journey at Bletchingley. Outdoor learning is an integral part of our daily routine in our EYFS. We encourage children to have all-weather clothing in school at all times and provide this as necessary. Staff seek to transmit a positive attitude towards the outdoors and the learning opportunities it provides. We aim for our outdoor environment to give the children the confidence to explore and learn, in a secure and safe, yet challenging space, which allows them to explore and understand the world around them.

Assessment and Record Keeping

In both Nursery and Reception, in school baseline assessments are carried out during the first half term. This is a fantastic opportunity for all Early Years practitioners to discover the unique personality and interests of each child. The school baseline assessment also reflects information from home visits and any reports and information from prior early care experiences. Once initial baselines have been completed for our two-year olds and staff have a greater knowledge of each child, we will complete the statutory 2 year check- which is shared with parents/carers. The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is also completed within the first six weeks of a child starting in Reception.

We use *Development Matters* to support regular assessments of our pupils in the Early Years. Practitioners monitor each individual child's progress through the age bands that are outlined in Development Matters- Birth to Three, Three to Four, Reception, Early Learning Goals. Each term, staff will make judgements on whether individual pupils are on track or not on track to meet end of year expectations. This information will be used to ensure that future planning reflects the identified group and individual needs within a cohort. For children that are working significantly below the typical age-related expectations outlined in *Development Matters*, we use the *Cherry Garden Framework*. This is a unique, child-centred framework, created by the Cherry Garden School alongside Tapestry. The branch maps help us to show smaller steps of progress and help us to identify achievable, next steps for each individual child- particularly in the prime areas of learning.

Formative assessment in the Early Years is continuous and takes the form of observations, examples of child-initiated learning and examples of adult-initiated/ focused learning opportunities. Every child has a learning folder and an online learning journal, via Tapestry. Reception children also have a literacy book. Parents/carers have access to Tapestry and will receive a notification when an observation has been added. They are encouraged to add comments and upload their own observations to show us their child's learning at home too. Throughout the year, at parent consultations and stay and plays, parents can view their child's literacy book and learning folder.

During the year, there are formal opportunities to feedback information and share individual next steps for each child, with parents and carers during parent/carer consultations. Parents and carers are vital partners in the assessment process. Towards the end of each term in Reception, we share a written report with parents. Nursery parents receive a written report towards the end of the Summer term. These reports comment on the child's development within the prime areas, identify the characteristics of effective learning and detail the child's next steps. For Reception children, this often focuses on Literacy and Mathematics, but is adapted accordingly for each individual child. For Nursery children, this usually focuses on the Prime Areas. For all children, this is individualised, so may focus on other areas of learning that may need to be their primary focus e.g. speech and language targets.

At the end of the year the statutory EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The class teacher will work with the early years practitioners, using exemplification documents and their knowledge of the children to make a 'best fit' judgement. The children are assessed as achieving a 1 or 2 against each area of the EYFS curriculum: 2 = Expected ELG – meeting the expected level. 1 = Emerging ELG – not yet meeting the expected level. EYFS profile data will be shared with parents/ carers in a written report at the end of the Summer term.

Parent Partnership

At Bletchingley, we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on pupils' learning and development. We believe that by working in partnership, we can enable each child to achieve his/ her potential. At Bletchingley, we do this by:

- ✓ Offering opportunities for parents/ carers to volunteer within school e.g., listening to children read, helping with craft activities in the classroom, helping on school trips.

- ✓ Sharing regular updates via Tapestry. We might share observations of a child's learning, photos, weekly learning memos, home learning ideas. We also welcome parents to share learning and/or experiences from home too, by commenting on our observations and adding their own observations onto Tapestry.
- ✓ Sharing information regarding a child's progress, their achievements, and their next steps, through reports and parent consultations.
- ✓ Operating an open-door policy for parents/ carers with any queries and concerns- they can communicate with staff at drop off or collection, or they can message via email or Tapestry.
- ✓ Carefully planning Transition into our Early Years setting.
 - We visit all Nursery starters prior to them attending our setting, so practitioners and parents can discuss home circumstances and the child's interests and needs.
 - We invite all parents to a Welcome meeting in the summer term before their child starts Reception.
- ✓ Welcoming parents into school for various events throughout the year: sharing assemblies, stay and play learning sessions, special events such as the Christmas Nativity, Sports Day, Significant Women in School.
- ✓ Inviting parents to welcome meetings, Phonics and Reading workshops, Maths workshops throughout the school year, so they can see how their children learn and how they can support them at home.
- ✓ Ensuring parents and carers are kept well informed about the curriculum and school life via letters, Tapestry updates, Twitter and Instagram updates, weekly newsletters, topic overviews, the school website.

Key Person System

Every child at Bletchingley is allocated a named member of staff as their key person. This enables children to make secure attachments with practitioners and develop positive relationships, so they feel safe, settled and valued in our setting. In Reception, the class teacher will take on the key worker role, with the learning assistants working closely with them too.

The key worker system enable us to:

- ✓ Ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- ✓ Build effective relationships with each child and their family, supporting parents/carers to engage in their child's learning and development at home too.
- ✓ Support every child to become familiar with the provision and daily routines.

Transition

This is carefully planned for to ensure a smooth transition for children into our Early Years and then into Key Stage One. Children and parents/carers need to feel secure and confident to face the new challenges of starting school and the significant changes as they progress through their school life. We recognise that children are vulnerable at stages of transition. We implement a range of strategies and activities to ensure a smooth and happy transition.

Transition into the EYFS

Prior to children starting at our Nursery, staff carry out home visits (or nursery visits, if a child has previously attended a different early years setting). During home visits, staff work alongside parents/carers to complete an 'All About Me' booklet, so we are well equipped with prior knowledge about the child, their needs and their interests before they start with us. At this time, a child-friendly welcome booklet is given to families, so that they have the chance to familiarise themselves with the setting before starting.

Families are welcomed into Nursery for stay and play sessions. We also offer settling in sessions, which are staggered, gradually increasing in length, until the child is comfortable attending for their full session. This transition is centred around each individual child and is agreed with the family, to ensure the most effective, positive start to school life for every child. Within the first half term of Nursery, we spend the time getting to know the children, identifying their strengths and their next steps. We then complete a 2 year check, which is shared with the parents/carers.

During the summer term, our reception staff visit a number of local nurseries and preschools, in order to familiarise themselves with the children and their starting points. Children are also invited to attend story times and stay and play sessions at Bletchingley, to develop familiarity with the setting and the staff. An Early Years parent/carer meeting takes place whilst the children have their induction session, which gives the parents the opportunity to meet staff and ask any questions, alleviating any concerns they may have. Welcome packs are given to all parents/ carers and also child-friendly, welcome booklets with photos of the classroom and the staff are shared with the children and their current nurseries/preschools. Families are given 'All About me' activities to complete. These are extremely helpful, giving EYFS staff prior knowledge such as child's likes and dislikes, medical information and other helpful information to support transition. Parents can arrange informal meet and greets too, if they wish.

In the autumn term, children begin on a part time timetable, with half the class attending at once, for either a morning or afternoon session. The whole class then attend for a slightly longer session and then begin to stay for lunch also. For the majority, all children will become full time within the first week, although timetables for individuals will be adapted if necessary. Our aim is for all children to feel settled, secure and familiar with school routines as quickly as possible, whilst also considering the needs of the parents/ carers and their own work/ home responsibilities.

Transition into Key Stage One

In the summer term of Reception, children have regular opportunities to meet with their new teacher/s prior to starting Year One. This builds gradually, with the new teacher visiting the Reception classroom, then the children visiting their new classroom for a story time and then the children visiting their new classroom for a morning. At the end of the academic year, the Early Years team have the opportunity to meet with the Year One team, to discuss each child's strengths, achievements and next steps, including end of year assessment data, to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year. Safeguarding information is also passed on at this meeting.

Throughout a child's year in Reception, we make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, the library and outdoor space (field/playground), to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school and for mixing with older children. During the Reception year, when children are ready, they are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assembly and whole school playtimes.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, embraces inclusion. All pupils and their families are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, gender, nationality, culture, abilities or social circumstances. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential.

We endeavour to meet the needs of all our pupils through:

- ✓ Responding to the diverse learning needs of all children and creating the conditions for optimal learning. We use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to inform this process, using our understanding of how the brain operates to develop effective learning and teaching strategies. We understand that, in

order for learning to take place, the brain needs to function in an appropriate physical and emotional state. This has implications for children who may have experienced trauma, or those who have distinct medical needs, physical difficulties, sensory, communication, behavioural difficulties, epilepsy, or other associated difficulties.

- ✓ Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which children are valued, their self-esteem promoted, their uniqueness appreciated and their achievements and successes celebrated.
- ✓ Ensuring all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, access all aspects of quality first teaching to enable them to reach their potential.
- ✓ Following a clear process for identifying, assessing, planning, providing and reviewing pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities, with pupils and their parents and carers at our school.
- ✓ Delivering a programme of training and support for all staff working with pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- ✓ Using resources, which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping which all children have equal access to.
- ✓ Working collaboratively with families or carers, the SENCo and other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists and Educational Psychologists.
- ✓ Monitoring pupil's progress and taking action to provide timely support as necessary.
- ✓ Setting realistic and challenging expectations and providing specific targets detailed in Individual Support Plans (ISP).

See our **BVPS SEND Policy** for further details.

Safety, including Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

'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.' (Statutory Framework for EYFS).

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance and also our school Safeguarding policies. At Bletchingley, we recognise our responsibility for promoting the welfare of our youngest pupils.

- ✓ Staff do not use their personal mobile phones in the classroom. Members of staff do, however, use school cameras/ tablets, to take photographs and videos. This may be for class displays, to upload to a child's online learning journal on Tapestry or for the school website or school social media accounts. When starting at Bletchingley, parents are asked whether they give permission for their child's image to be used in this way, giving photographic consent.
- ✓ We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development, recognising the importance of both oral hygiene and general hygiene, as well as following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.
- ✓ All accidents are taken seriously and are logged in our accident folders in the Early Years classrooms. We always contact parents/carers straight away, if a child bangs his/her head.
- ✓ We have robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role. We provide induction for new staff and a staff code of conduct is shared, to help staff understand their roles, responsibilities and key information about how things work at Bletchingley.
- ✓ We believe that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. We ensure that all children are safeguarded by actively encouraging members of staff to maintain a culture of vigilance and work together proactively with children and families who may need help. All our staff undergo the required safeguarding training which is regularly updated, and all staff are confident with the procedures for reporting concerns.

- ✓ Regular risk assessments are completed to ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose.
- ✓ A large number of our EYFS practitioners hold the Paediatric First aid qualification.
- ✓ Staffing will be organised to ensure the safety of the pupils and to ensure staff/child ratios are always followed.
- ✓ Pupils' behaviour is managed effectively through the use of a whole school approach to behaviour (see *Behaviour for Learning* policy).

Intimate Care

Depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

See our ***Intimate Care Policy*** for further details.

Appendices

Development Matters:

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Early Years Statutory Framework:

[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile:

[Early years foundation stage profile: 2024 handbook \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Cherry Garden Framework:

[Branch maps – Cherry Garden School](#)

School policies:

[Bletchingley Village Primary School & Nursery - School Policies and Documents \(bletchingleytl.co.uk\)](https://bletchingleytl.co.uk)

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