



Bedfield and Wetheringsett C of E Primary Schools Early Years Policy

Author & Version	S.Sheeran / E.Dickson (V2)
Date	22 nd November 2023
Approved By	I.Wallis
Review By Date	21 st November 2026



The Mustard Seed

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, when it is grown, it becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches.” Matthew 13:31 – 32

The Mustard Seed

“If you have faith as small as a mustard seed... nothing will be impossible for you.” Matthew 17:20-21



Early Years Policy

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

*"Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage",
Department for Education, 2014*

Our aims and principles

At Bedfield and Wetheringsett Primary Schools, we are committed to providing a high quality early years education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. This based on the following aims and principles:

- For our children to forge positive relationships and a strong sense of self.
- For them to build upon what they already know and can do.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum for every child based on our principles of growing skills for life.
- To provide a safe and stimulating learning environment in which all children can learn, develop and grow.

Induction Arrangements

Reception Children

The children will usually have three visits prior to starting school full time, consisting of an afternoon, a morning and a morning including lunch. The aim of these visits is to enable the children to become familiar with the routines of the school day and spend time with their new classmates, teachers and teaching assistants. For children starting school later in the year, an individual phased entry timetable is possible, organised between home and school, which allows the children to settle in on a part time basis before becoming a full time pupil.

Organisation

At Bedfield and Wetheringsett Primary Schools, we have a mixed reception and key stage 1 class. Activities are planned to ensure needs of all children are met and teachers are flexible in adapting teaching approaches and activities during these sessions.

The Early Years children have use of a dedicated room, attached to the main classroom and an outdoor area, equipped to meet the requirements of the EYFS curriculum. The room has a carpet area, primarily for class and group sessions, and the rest of the area, inside and outside, is set up to facilitate learning and development in the EYFS areas of learning. This is done through continuous provision in mathematics, literacy, construction, small world, sand and water, role play, music, creative and malleable play. These are designed for continuous, child-led learning and are enhanced by practitioners according to different needs and themes we are exploring.

Staff are organised to support the children in a balance of adult led and child initiated experiences throughout the day. Most sessions include free flow access to the outdoor area. Practitioners are flexible in planning and teaching to be able to respond to unplanned events and topics that the children are interested in.

Early years children are supported to feel part of their class, alongside the KS1 children but spend the majority of their time in their own area. The proportion of time they spend with the rest of the class in the main classroom increases over the year according to the needs of the children.

Key Person Approach

At Bedfield and Wetheringsett , the class teacher(s) takes on the role of each child's key person. This is done with the support of the class teaching assistant(s).

The key person's responsibilities include:

- helping the child to become familiar with the setting
- working in partnership and building a relationship with each child's parents or carers
- responding sensitively to the child's needs, feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- ensuring that the learning opportunities on offer meet the needs of each child.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum

At Bedfield and Wetheringsett , we understand that children's early education underpins all development and learning in future years. We strive to support, develop and embed the children's learning in all areas of the Early Years curriculum, promoting the children's:

The three prime areas:

Personal, social and emotional development - Learning how to work and play together fairly, develop personal and moral values and understand their own needs and those of others around them.

Children work in small groups within lessons and are encouraged to share, listen to one another and take turns when working.

Physical Development - Having an awareness of space and control in movement and developing gross and fine motor skills. Learning about health and self care.

Children take part in 2 weekly PE sessions with support from a PE specialist. They also work on their fine motor and gross motor skills daily through dough gym and outdoor large scale equipment both in their choosing time and on the large wooden equipment at playtime.

Communication and Language - Developing listening, attention, speaking and understanding skills.

The children take part in a number of adult-led activities every day where they are encouraged to listen to and follow instructions, share their ideas, work with one another and work on their speaking skills through imaginative play.

These prime areas are the building blocks from which all other learning stems.

The four specific areas are:

Literacy - Developing reading and writing ability.

All of the members of the class take part in daily phonics sessions using Little Wandle. They participate in Literacy activities, mark making, writing, reading, and exploring their love of stories and independence in their writing. Independent writing is set up for children both indoors and outdoors.

Mathematics - Developing an understanding of number, measure, pattern, shape and space and time.

We encourage lots of 'real-world' mathematics through problem solving, number recognition, role play and activities which engage children in maths. They take part in daily maths tasks with an adult, specifically linked to their next steps and needs.

Understanding the world - Finding out about the world and people around them, exploring their own and other cultures and finding out about and using technology to support their learning.

Reception children have beebots in their classroom, as well as a large computer screen for them to explore and take part in games. As a school we have laptops and iPads that the children can use in their lessons. We take the children out on trips and visits during the year and try to organise visitors

to come in to meet the children.

Expressive Arts and Design - *Developing their imagination through art work, designing and making, movement, music and dramatic play.*

Reception children join in with music and art lessons during the week. They also have freely chosen activities linked to art, design and expression which are set up daily for them to take part in and explore. Children have access to role play and small world play areas in the classroom as well.

These specific areas are interlinked and dependent on the children's development within the prime areas.

We also aim to develop the children's ability to learn effectively. For this we take into consideration the

EYFS Characteristics of Effective Learning:

Playing and Exploring - Engagement

Active Learning - Motivation

Creating and Thinking Critically - Thinking

Forest Schools -

At Bedfield and Wetheringsett the children enjoy weekly Forest School sessions where they enjoy a range of adult directed and freely chosen activities. They learn to manage risk and their own safety with support from trained Forest School experts, work on communication and relationships by carrying out team activities. They explore what nature has to offer, developing their understanding of the world and practise their physical skills during these sessions. It's an opportunity for all children to experience the awe and wonder of nature around them and to provide them with a lifelong love and respect of nature and the world around them.

Religious Education -

Weekly RE lessons are provided for all children in Reception, we follow the Emmanuel project schemes of work. They take part in whole school activities linked to the church as well as daily collective worship sessions.

Planning

Our planning has a sharp focus on the children's needs, their interests and their stages of development. We recognise that the seven areas of learning cannot be delivered in isolation and seek opportunities to make links between them. We aim to deliver the curriculum through purposeful play and adult led activities. Long term planning is on a one year rolling programme based on some KS1 topics, adapted to meet the needs of the younger children. Medium and short term planning shows the key learning experiences for each area of the curriculum, including continuous provision. Practitioners use this flexibly, choosing learning experiences to meet the needs of the children and adapt planning according to how the children's interests develop.

Effective Teaching and Learning

We encourage the children to play an active role in shaping their learning experiences. Adults engage in discussion with the children about what they are interested in, which skills they would like to develop further and which resources they need to support their learning.

We aim to provide a rich learning environment that offers high quality opportunities for the children to learn through play, their own and others work. There is a range of continuous provision available in the unit including:

- Outdoor area (including sand pit, play house, mud station and further outdoor resources including gross motor activities)
- Quiet area (including book area)
- Sand and water
- Construction
- Creative craft
- Writing/mark making and phonics resources
- Painting and colour exploration

- Small world imaginative play
- ICT equipment (including laptops)
- Listening area
- Maths resources
- Malleable station
- Science/investigation resources
- Role play
- Musical instruments
- Fine motor exploration

This provision is designed to offer open-ended, practical learning opportunities. Children are supported to think creatively and imaginatively, exploring how resources can be adapted. Provision is enhanced with additional resources, based on the children's play and interests.

Teaching and learning in Early Years takes place within child and adult led activities. In both, the children are supported to develop problem-solving skills through tasks and opportunities are encouraged to share their thinking with others. The amount of time spent taking part in adult led activities increases throughout the year.

Activity time within a small group or class session is often adult led or adult initiated, including phonics, literacy and maths sessions. The adult's role during this time is to teach, scaffold and observe how children respond to instructions, gather information, solve problems and extend their learning and development. The children are encouraged to have an active role in their learning and be engaged and motivated in these group activities. Group and class activities will take into account the needs, interest and abilities of the children.

Choosing time is child initiated learning time. Within this time children will 'choose' from planned activities and have access to resources to extend their learning. Child initiated learning time is a chance for children to play and explore, be active in their learning and to create and think critically within their chosen play. Opportunities are available for children to solve problems, work individually or with others, choose and use resources independently, have and develop their own ideas and take risks in a safe and secure environment.

Within child and adult led/initiated activities adults will:

- Support children in their play and interactions with other people
- Ask open-ended questions (and closed ones where appropriate)
- Extend the children's ideas, play and learning
- Focus on children's next steps and develop these skills within their play
- Introduce new resources and concepts
- Help children practise and develop skills

Adults will observe and collect evidence from children's child-initiated play to help provide a picture of the child's learning and development, and plan for their next steps.

Children from Reception also take part in class PE lessons, two times a week. They are encouraged to dress and undress independently and take care and pride in looking after their belongings. They also join the KS1 children for some other lessons as they progress through the year, including music.

Observation and Assessment

We base our assessments on regular observations of the children in different contexts. Both observation and assessment is ongoing and helps to inform planning. Methods of observation include:

- Daily observational notes, focusing on children's significant achievements and learning
- Long observations
- Photographic evidence
- Practitioners' knowledge of the whole child

Observations and assessments are shared and evaluated regularly among practitioners to ensure all EY staff have up to date knowledge and in depth understanding of each child as a learner. We use this information to plan activities and individual next steps which will consolidate, develop and embed their skills and knowledge. Observations are gathered to form each child's 'Learning Journey' to build a unique picture of what each child knows, feels and can do, as well as their particular interests and how they learn. An electronic compilation of observations and a paper workbook make up the complete 'Learning Journey' for each child. At four stages in the year each child's 'Learning Journey', along with practitioners knowledge of each child, form an assessment of their developmental stage in relation to the Early Years Outcomes.

The 'Learning Journeys' form the basis of the Early Years Profile at the end of the Reception year. These end of EYFS assessments are shared with parents and Year 1 teachers, along with a written report on each child's learning and development within the EYFS seven areas of learning and characteristics of effective learning. This assessment and report aim to help inform parents of their child's learning and development during their reception year. Parents are also invited for a meeting with the EY teacher if they wish to discuss the report. Children who have been identified as 'Emerging' in Early Learning Goals are discussed with the SENCO to ensure further support is in place if necessary.

Parental Involvement

We value parents as essential partners in learning and we strive to ensure positive relationships are developed between home and school. Parents are able to have daily contact with staff in school. Children and parents are greeted daily by a staff member at the gate but the class teacher is available daily to discuss any concerns. Parents are encouraged to share and discuss any worries or concerns with staff. Similarly, at the end of the session/day staff are available. Regular letters and correspondence keep parents up to date with information. Termly newsletters give parents insight into topics and learning opportunities. Parents are invited to share in their child's learning, and the school community, in various ways including, contributing to their Learning Journeys, joining us for parent lunches and class assemblies, and for various other events throughout the year (including trips).

Teachers provide sessions to support parents in helping their child(ren) at home, especially focussing on supporting parents with their child's phonics. This is the method in which our children are taught to read and write. We appreciate this is new for many parents and staff are more than happy to discuss and support parents with encouraging their child's phonics at home.

As well as more informal situations that allow staff and parents to discuss and share their child's learning and progress (daily contact, reading diaries, homework notes), parents are more formally invited to discuss their child's progress and learning during two parents' evenings held in the autumn and spring terms. During these parents' meetings, 'Learning Journeys' are shared. Parents are invited to make a contribution to their child's 'Learning Journey' throughout the year using Tapestry.

An interim report focusing on the 'Characteristics of Learning' is sent home in the spring term and a report relating to all areas of learning is sent home in the summer term. Reception children's parents are also invited to discuss their child's Early Years Profile during a meeting held in the Summer Term.

Community Links and the Wider World

Over the year, we arrange visits from members of the local community and/or other educational visitors to support our topic work. We also arrange trips for children within the local community, for example visiting the church or other local places of interest. The children take part in several educational visits linked to their topic work. Film clips, non-fiction texts and artefacts are also used to introduce new concepts in real-life contexts. We aim to develop the children's awareness of other cultures by exploring different countries and celebrations through topics.

Behaviour Management

Our aim is that all children will flourish in a secure environment in which, boundaries and expectations are clear. Children will be supported and encouraged by adults to verbalise their feelings and to adopt a problem-solving approach to dealing with social conflict in order to develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect to achieve this:

- Expectations will be made clear to new children who join the setting. This will be done as

- developmentally appropriate and so not to bombard the child with an overload of information.
- The teaching of personal, social, emotional skills will support the development of children's values and attitudes, this will be done through child led and adult led activities.
 - Adults will provide a consistent, positive role model and will endorse desirable behaviour.
 - In any case of misbehaviour it will be made clear that it is the behaviour that is unwelcome, not the child.
 - Any behavioural problems will be dealt with in a developmentally appropriate way, respecting individual children's level of understanding and maturity, and acknowledging that some kinds of behaviour may arise for a child's additional needs.
 - Adults will support children in working towards acceptable behaviour.
 - Recurring problems will be tackled by all staff in partnership with the parents to establish understanding of the cause and a clear way forward.

In most cases of undesirable behaviour a 3-5 minute timer (depending on the child's age and individual needs) will be used in conjunction with a 'time out' to allow time for the child to reflect on their behaviour. Adults will support the child to identify what behaviour was not welcome.

Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for further information.

Food and Drink

Snack time is approached as a group activity. Within this time the children are supported with their social and communication skills. A selection of healthy snacks are available, supplied by "The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme". Children are supported to gain independence with the routine of preparing to eat, including washing and drying hands, and selection of drink and snack. Fresh drinking water is available at all times.

Information about the children's dietary needs is sought when they enter the setting. A list of the children's dietary needs is available in school for staff.

Safeguarding

Please refer to the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

The school's ethos supports the development of cultural and personal identities and prepares our children for full participation in society. Every child needs to achieve and feel success in order to develop a positive self-image. We recognise that all our children, including those with English as an additional language and special educational needs, can require an adjusted approach in order for them to have access to the whole curriculum and therefore reach their full potential.

We can support each child's needs by:

- removing or helping to overcome barriers where these already exist
- being alert to the early signs of needs that could later lead to difficulties and responding quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as required
- stretching and challenging all children

Please refer to the school's 'Equality' and 'Special Educational Needs' policies for further information.