

**Benthal Primary School**

**Early Years Policy**

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| **Agreed by** | Chair of Governors |
| **Approval Date** |  |
| **Review Date** |  |

**Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In partnership with parents and carers, we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. Teachers and teaching assistants provide the curriculum in the reception classes of up to a class size of 30 children.

**Aims and Objectives**

At Benthal, we aspire to become confident life-long learners who have the skills to reach our goals. In creating a positive environment where everybody matters, we celebrate differences and respect ourselves and others. We endeavor to create irresistible learning through our curriculum.

At Benthal, we encourage all children to be “Learners, Achievers, and Friends”.

*As Learners we:*

* Are good listeners
* Ask questions
* Are creative thinkers
* Are problem solvers
* Read widely to expand our minds

*As Achievers we:*

* Persevere and stay positive
* Take pride in our work
* Aim high
* Are resilient
* Work hard

*As Friends we:*

* Resolve differences together
* Are trustworthy and honest
* Share, co-operate and work as a team
* Respect our differences

**Learning and Development**

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are prime areas and four specific areas.

The prime areas underpin all of the basics and support the other more specific areas of the curriculum. They are as follows:

* Communication and language
* Physical development
* Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are:

* Literacy
* Mathematics
* Understanding of the world and
* Expressive arts and design

At Benthal, we follow the statutory framework as detailed below:

“Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.” (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2017)

**Planning and Assessment**

Planning and guided children’s activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. We support children in using the *three characteristics of effective teaching and learning*. These are;

* **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’;
* **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
* **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2017)

We ensure that planning:

* provides a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities across the day;
* provides opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
* provides challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
* incorporates a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs;
* takes into account resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observations, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child’s level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels.

**Learning Environments**

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children’s interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded on Tapestry, an online journal and in the children’s Learning Journals.

We place a strong emphasis on the importance and value of daily outdoor experiences for children’s learning and development. Children need an outdoor environment that can provide them with space and places

to explore, experiment, discover, be active and healthy, and to develop their physical capabilities.

**Inclusion**

All children and their families are valued at Benthal. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the Assistant Headteacher for Safegeuarding and Inclusion is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the SEND policy.

In order to accommodate the individual’s particular learning style lessons will be planned wherever possible in a multi-sensory way so that the various activities will cater for all pupils in the spirit of inclusion. There will also be a consideration of how to record lesson outcomes so that the pupil is offered a variety of methods and is not inhibited by any specific difficulty.

**Safeguarding**

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See the Safeguarding Policy)

At Benthal, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. We understand that we are required to:

* promote the welfare and safeguarding 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 risk assessment records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

**Equal Opportunities**

Every member of the school is treated as an individual. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

**Partnership with Parents**

At Benthal, we recognise that parents are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

* talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
* support children through the transition from pre-school/ Nursery to Reception with the children attending in age order during the first two weeks. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children.
* Arranging a settling-in-review at the start of the year in order to detail how we aim to work with their child ;
* encouraging parents to talk to the child’s teacher if there are any concerns. There are three formal meeting for parents at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child’s progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
* organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: class assemblies and trips and school visits;
* providing parents an opportunity to celebrate their child’s learning and development by contributing to their child’s learning journal on Tapestry;
* ensuring all parents know that their child’s teacher and nursery education officer are their key workers.

**Transition**

We understand that starting school can be a daunting experience for children and parents. At Benthal, we ensure that children experience a smooth transition from Nursery providers to Reception as well as from Reception to Key Stage One.

**1**

Home visits are carried out by staff. It is a great way for the school to get to

know the children and for them to feel confident with us. It also gives parents the

chance to ask any questions about the school.

**2**

Parents and children are invited to the school again to their allocated class to meet

their teacher, Nursery Education Officer and the children who will be in their class.

**3**

A staggered start takes place in the first two weeks of the autumn term to allow the

children to settle into their new class.

**4**

An induction meeting for parents takes place to discuss school procedures, curriculum

and questions that parents may have.

**5**

Parents are invited for a settling-in-review after six weeks of their child starting to

discuss how their child has settled in at our school.

Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child’s skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child’s stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.