

Barming Pre-School and Primary School

Part of the Orchard Academy Trust



Early Years Foundation Policy

Headteacher: Mr C. Laker

Chair of Governing Body: Rev W. North

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Signature of Headteacher:	Mr C Laker
Policy Author:	Name: Miss H Cook
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Early Years Foundation Policy

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in our Pre-School and Reception classes. Our Pre-School can accommodate up to 40 children per session from the age of 2. We offer all Government funding types for eligible families. Families also have the option to pay for additional sessions. Our Reception setting accommodates 60 children across two classes aged from 4 years to 5 years old. Children will be offered a place in the September following their fourth birthday. There are currently two qualified Teachers working within the Foundation Stage, two full time Teaching Assistants and a Teaching Assistant working mornings, who work together very closely to share ideas and information on the children to be able to plan effectively, ensure continuity and best practice. In our pre-school we have a manager and a team of pre-school assistants (TAs) who work to meet the required ratios for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Vision for EYFS

- Happy and healthy children and adults.
- Positive relationships between children, staff and parents.
- A bespoke and inspiring EYFS curriculum, reflecting the needs and interests of our children.
- Immersion in a language rich environment.
- Quality and purposeful interactions between TAs, pre-school staff, teachers and children – asking why, how, explain...
- Elevating child-initiated time so that play is meaningful and the children are making connections – sounds in the environment, number recognition and counting.
- Working closely with our pre-school and other settings to develop a smooth transition into Reception – building strong foundations and a seamless integration into Barming Pre-School and Primary School.

Working Together

Collaborative working across the pre-school and both classes is critical in developing a curriculum that is appropriate for all the children that come into our care. It is incredibly important to have good communication between all staff to be able to plan and deliver experiences that the children will be fully immersed in.

Shared PPA planning time is in place in order to allow meaningful discussions between TAs and teachers to ensure a range of activities and opportunities are carefully prepared and planned. This time will also be used to inspire each other and to evaluate the experiences being provided for the children. In Reception, children are taught by an additional skilled Early Years teacher and our forest school practitioner during PPA time.

Working closely with the Pre-School ensures a consistent approach and enables the establishment of an early phonics scheme that can continue to be built upon as they progress through primary school. Our chosen scheme is Read, Write Inc.

The Learning Environment and Provision

Our outside provision is a crucial element in the EYFS framework. Being outside and in nature has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and development. It also supports confidence and allows opportunities for big scale play, problem solving and creativity in the company of other children.

Children are able to take calculated risks within outside play, especially during our Forest School sessions. Outdoor play helps to extend the children's use of language as the outside space is vast and allows them to use more of their senses of see, hear, touch and smell.

Within our learning environment we zone our areas in order to further support the children's development. The zoning of areas helps the children to highlight various activities and the different types of learning that can take place e.g. scooters, construction, mud kitchen and literacy and maths using tuff trays.

Intent

The overall aim is to provide all the children in EYFS the best possible start in their learning journey. As a team, we are given the precious job of contributing to the most critical and fundamental time in a child's school journey and we need to foster a love of learning and support the children to be equipped with the life skills that they can take with them as they develop into young people.

Every child is unique and it is our role to have high expectations of each and every child and to provide opportunities for them to share their knowledge and understanding with us.

Given the materials, resources and a safe space, we want to encourage the children to be independent and inquisitive. We want our children to make good progress from their starting points and to achieve their Early Learning Goals.

Implementation

Children learn most effectively when they are healthy, safe/secure and when their individual needs are met with positive relationships with the adults around them and who care for them.

Our aim is to provide a setting that encompasses a safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy and grow in confidence and independence.

The curriculum is delivered through the 7 areas of learning:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development
- Communication and language development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

The core aim of a good EYFS is to make sure that we provide a solid and strong platform for children to become lifelong learners. To be able to develop children at an early age we

need to make sure that our youngest children develop the three prime areas first before developing the four specific areas.

Children in EYFS learn through the following opportunities and experiences:

- Playing
- Exploring
- Tailored learning to the interest of the child
- Active learning and Critical thinking that takes place inside and outside. The outside environment is available during all weathers, and the children are able to make decisions about what they need in different weather conditions.
- Effective continuous provision will enable our children to develop life skills such as independence, innovation, creativity, enquiry, analysis and problem solving.

All practitioners in EYFS take on the roles of teacher, facilitator and assessor, engaging with children in their play in order to move learning on.

Children learn early reading and writing through a daily phonics session which builds on prior learning. It is adapted according to age, stage and need and is highly structured from Reception. Phonic skills are reinforced through play and provision. We use the Read, Write Inc programme, which starts in the last term of Pre-school and continues into Reception and KS1.

Children's early number, calculation and measuring skills are developed through a daily focussed mathematics session in Reception, and with provision that reflects the children's current learning needs. In the pre-school this is supported through our continuous provision and carpet/small group sessions.

Impact

The children have varied and diverse starting places. Therefore, high expectations ensure that children can make strong progress across all areas of the EYFS curriculum. Progress is evident from observations, speaking to children, documenting the children's learning journey, floor books and data.

'Wow' moments are captured by the adult (and or Key Person) and shared with parents (either face to face or by electronic communications via certain platforms e.g Class Dojo) so they can celebrate the children's successes throughout the day.

Assessment happens minute by minute in the EYFS as Teachers and TAs are always talking to the children to see where the children need to take their learning next.

The impact of a varied and enriching curriculum is also measured by how the children in our care develop into well rounded individuals and how they carry the knowledge, skills and attitudes which make them lifelong learners.

The Curriculum

The Foundation Stage is a unique phase that has been created for children aged from birth to 5. Pre-School and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the [2024 Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) framework](#) and [Development Matters Non-statutory guidance](#) in the EYFS.

The framework:

- sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well
- ensures children are kept healthy and safe
- ensures that children have the knowledge and skills they need to start school

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We ensure the children are able to feel confident within the setting by having clear expectations and boundaries. The children feel secure with their routine and are able to identify what is happening next through the use of a visual timetable in both Pre-school and Reception. The children are given a sense of purpose and importance when given their own responsibilities such as helping to distribute the fruit to their peers and maintaining the visual timetable, as appropriate to their age and stage.

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning. We promote the use of both the inside and outside as potential learning environments and encourage free flow between these areas daily. Children are taught (particularly outside) to explore and take risks and how to manage these safely. At Barming Pre-School and Primary School we are extremely fortunate to have our own Forest School style learning. This is a unique method of Outdoor Education that allows children to develop confidence, independence, self-esteem and awareness and knowledge of the natural environment. It is a child centred and child led programme that provides the opportunity for the children to use their personal learning style to complete their chosen tasks.

Learning and development

Our Reception has two classrooms and a large outdoor classroom, which is shared. All our learning environments are defined and organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** areas of learning:

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

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

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

It is understood that children will reach their full potential in the specific areas once they are achieving well in the Prime areas.

At Barming Pre- School and Primary School all areas are delivered through a well-planned play-based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the EYFS our planning ensures that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long-term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a half termly theme-based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account. We aim to make the learning as motivating and engaging for all children and to ensure we make the most of their talents.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the EYFS. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, 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.

Phonics

At Barming Pre-School and Primary School we implement a structured phonics session using the Read Write Inc. programme as a firm basis. Phonics starts in the pre-school where the children experience singing, nursery rhymes and listening. They are introduced to Read, Write Inc using their Nursery handbook at the appropriate stage in their development. When listening and responding to the children we aim to respond with open ended questions rather than a yes or no answer to encourage talk. As well as this, the programme prepares children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills in a detailed and systematic manner. This is taught daily across both classes using an engaging and interactive approach. Children who are experiencing difficulty are identified quickly and interventions are put into place to ensure they are being given the necessary support to acquire these important skills.

Maths

Maths is taught on a daily basis in Reception. As well as discrete teaching the children are provided with opportunities to experience and learn number through play. This is mirrored in the pre-school. We recognise that Maths can take place in any environment and we promote the use of learning maths skills outside at every opportunity. At a very early stage, the children are encouraged to work independently and to take responsibility for their learning during the session. As with phonics children experiencing any difficulties are identified early and support measures are put into place.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the Reception teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are;

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.

Our responsibility – To regularly monitor the learning environments to ensure they are promoting engagement with stimulating resources and providing flexible spaces where children can explore, build, move and role play.

Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.

Our responsibility - To present the children with new and exciting resources and learning experiences and ensure children have the time to become deeply involved in their activities.

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas; make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Our responsibility – To talk to the children during the learning process and ensure opportunities for children to use their own ideas.

Assessment

Throughout EYFS children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked. Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children.

In September Reception children will be assessed during the first 6 weeks of school using the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). It provides a snapshot of where children are when they arrive at school. It will provide a starting point for a new measure that will help parents understand how well schools support their pupils to progress between reception and Year 6. The RBA is short, interactive and a practical assessment of a child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school. Alongside this, practitioners will also make judgements based on the observations of children during activities and play. We strongly believe at Barming Pre-School and Primary School that the children's first weeks of the setting or school are an important time to settle and allow the adults time to get to know the children. Parents' views on their child as a learner will also be taken into account.

Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as meeting the expected levels of development (expected) or if they are not yet reaching expected levels (emerging) based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum. This information will be added to the school's assessment tracker (Arbor), termly, to ensure that children from all groups including any vulnerable groups are making good progress.

Our children's knowledge, skills and understanding will continue to be tracked throughout the Foundation Stage and assessed against the ELG's at the end of Reception to establish an end of Foundation Stage achievement. Alongside professional discussions regarding the children this will ensure the Year One teachers are able to plan from September effectively to meet all of the children's needs. Parents are informed of where their child is through parent consultations and in Reception a written report is shared.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the Foundation Stage, embraces inclusion. 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 achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to 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.

We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Inclusion Manager and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Transitions

At Barming Pre-School and Primary School, we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. We have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

Children starting the pre-school have a visit with a parent/carer to experience the setting and also to meet with the pre-school manager. A suitable programme of settling in sessions is then designed to meet individual pupils needs.

Regular meetings are held with our pre-school and other settings to build strong links, good communication and identify any concerns or needs as early as possible. Teachers alongside the Inclusion Manager visit the pre-school during the summer term to observe and get to know the children who are beginning school in September. The EYFS Lead and Pre-school manager have contact throughout the school year to discuss children moving to Reception. We will endeavour to visit children attending Barming Pre-School and Primary School in September at their pre-school setting to talk with key workers and to meet the children in a familiar environment. During the summer term children will be invited to story sessions within their new classroom to familiarise themselves with their new environment and Class Teachers. Play and Stay sessions where children can come and explore their new environment are also offered to help the children to settle in. During these sessions parents will be offered an informal opportunity to meet with the Inclusion Manager.

At the beginning of the year in Reception there will be a two-week settling in period to ensure that children have the time to become secure and familiar with the new routines before starting school full time. Parents/Carers are invited into school for 30 minutes to discuss their child and raise any relevant information. During this time, the Baseline assessment is completed 1:1 with a member of the Reception team. This means that during the first few weeks of school the teacher has a good understanding of the children's starting points and that they can be in provision with all the children. This ensures that the class teachers can really get to know the children and establish their needs therefore enabling them to have the time to support them fully. During the second week all the children will attend in the mornings and will be invited to stay for lunch. The third week children will begin their first full week at school.

During the summer term of Reception, children will be given the opportunity to meet with their new Year One Teacher for a story and to visit their new classroom. At the end of each school year teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's skills, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

During children's time in Reception a range of shared activities are planned for all classes to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout the Foundation Stage. Children in Reception make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, playgrounds and playing field for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school and for mixing with older children when they begin in Key Stage 1. To assist the children with their transition into school life they are also partnered with a Year 6 'buddy'. This 'buddy' will accompany them to lunch and meet through the year for some collaborative working and support.

Community Links

At Barming Pre-School and Primary School the Reception classes enrich learning and encourage strong links with the community through visits to places in the local area such as Barming Post Office and war memorial. We also invite members of the community in to support learning when appropriate for our current theme. For example, parents who are firefighters, paramedics and police officers were encouraged to come and share their skills with the children to support the theme of 'People who help us'. Parents are also invited to come in and share their experiences and knowledge of personal celebrations and festivals.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. As well as 'sharing the learning journey' visit days we offer parents a variety of learning meetings to provide

advice and information on how they can support their child's learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers. We encourage parents to support in Reception wherever possible, for example, helping with the gardening and hearing children read. In Reception parents are encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records, simple challenges to complete at home.

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We provide every child in Reception with a 'Sharing' book. The purpose of these books is so that parents can share information about their child's experiences and achievements outside school. This information helps to build a well-rounded picture of the child for everyone. It also promotes the child's speaking and listening and self-esteem by encouraging them to talk about and share their achievements with their friends.

At Barming Pre-School and Primary School we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. Formal parent consultations are offered twice a year, where parents have the opportunity to speak with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their child's learning journals. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day or make an appointment to speak with the teacher.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

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 follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Each EYFS class/setting has access to their own toileting facilities, and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.