The Beacon

Early Years Foundation

Policy

Due for Review: October 2026

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1 Introduction

> "Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to reach their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance."

The Early Years Foundation Stage 2025 (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

The EYFS provides:

- Quality and consistency
- Secure foundation
- Partnership working
- Equality of opportunity

2 Aims

- To provide a high-quality learning and developmentally-appropriate environment through which all children access a broad and balanced inclusive curriculum, that fosters their intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- To enable all children to learn and develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and understanding which prepare them for their continuing education.
- To ensure continuous formative observational assessment (including Baseline), summative assessments three times a year and to ensure planning and individual next steps based on these formative assessments.
- To plan for each child's individual care and learning requirements, focusing on countering underachievement and overcoming barriers.
- To promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference within all children and help children to value different aspects of their own and other peoples' lives.
- To promote a positive, mutually respectful, and interactive partnership between home and school in which individual progress is shared and next steps in learning discussed.
- To enable all children to develop positive dispositions for learning and high levels of well-being and involvement.
- To work together with professionals from other agencies to identify needs and to provide best learning opportunities for children.
- To enable children to make an effective transition from home to school and from nursery or pre-school to Reception and Year 1.

Since September 2023, we have followed the Department for Education Statutory requirements contained in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and non-statutory guidance from birth to five matters. The guiding principles, which underpin our practice in our Early Years classes, are grouped under the following four themes.

3 A unique child

At The Beacon School we recognise that every child has potential to be a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We also encourage children to develop intrinsic inner motivation.

4 Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of differences. All children at The Beacon School are treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, religion, or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

At The Beacon School, we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences, their capabilities and difficulties when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with additional educational needs, children who are higher achievers, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide additional support as necessary;
- Ensuring a healthy balance between child initiated and adult–led activities.

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 follow the whole school Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy: all children have an individual Wellbeing Cycle Support Plans (WCSP). These are written and reviewed in liaison with both the parents, the class teacher and when necessary, the MAST team. Teaching Assistants are also involved in drawing up the WCSPs to ensure the whole staff team is fully informed.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Safeguarding Children Policy)

5 Welfare

> "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."

At The Beacon School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children;
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the premises, furniture, and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose;
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- Ensure whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

6 Communication and interaction

Many of our children have speech and/or language delays/disorders. Some have severely delayed receptive and expressive language. Most children have significant social and interaction difficulties.

It is vital that we provide an enriched language environment with the focus on overcoming barriers to learning and development.

Supporting children's speech and language and social and interaction skills is embedded in our teaching/ learning approach, routines and environment.

We may need to use any of the following strategies to support the children:

- Use clear and graded language;
- Keep listening time short and supported by visual aids;
- Use visual timetables so children know what is happening;
- Display and use symbols throughout the environment and sets of symbols specific to set activities;
- Give thinking time;
- Maintain confidence by listening to and accepting all contributions;

- Encourage children to self- check and evaluate using phrases/questions such as; “good thinking, try again/ have another go, what do you think? Are you happy with that? Do you want to change that?”;
- Use and encourage use of Makaton signing.
- Develop phonological awareness through rhyme, story, and song with plenty of opportunity for overlearning;
- Assess and support children’s speech sound production using Speech Link and individual programmes;
- Assess and support children’s receptive and expressive language skills using Language Steps, where appropriate;
- Encourage functional communication skills within the natural environment and everyday happenings;
- Encourage development of pragmatic skills in the natural play/ social situation;
- Write personal and group social stories to support social understanding and skills;
- Use ‘Social Use of Language Programme’ (Social Foundations);
- For children whose home language is not English we provide opportunities for children to use their home language in play and learning.

7 Positive relationships

At The Beacon School we aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

8 Parents as partners

We recognise that parents and carers 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 their children.

We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- The teacher or **key worker** offers to visit all children in their home setting prior to their starting school;
- Offering parents, regular opportunities to talk about their child’s progress and allowing free access to the children’s ~~‘Learning Journey’ books and folders;~~ Evidence for Learning
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child’s teacher if there are any concerns. There are formal meetings for parents regularly at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child’s progress towards the EHC outcomes. Parents receive a report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: assemblies, sports day, Christmas celebrations, etc.;
- Parents will receive regular updates of their child’s learning through Evidence for Learning. Parents will also be able to share and celebrate learning at home with school using this platform;
- Meet and greets with teachers and key workers to promote key information and first point of contact for all new parents;

- Sharing communication via our MIS system (Arbor). This is a valuable link between home and school. This is particularly valuable for those parents who are unable to come into school on a regular basis;
- All children have a key worker to ensure that the child feels safe and secure;
- Supporting parents' knowledge and use of Makaton signing and Cued Articulation;
- Welfare "check-in" calls to parents when child is absent.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them. In Year R/Year 1 classes, children are given key workers to help and support them through their EYFS journey.

9 Enabling environments

At The Beacon School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The learning environment

The EYFS learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The learning spaces are set up in learning areas, where children can find and locate equipment and resources. There is a central 'heart space' designed to provide a space for inclusive opportunities where children can learn and interact with children from different classes and an area set-up so children can access sensory circuits throughout the day.

All EYFS classes have an enclosed shared outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers children the chance to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

10 Learning and development

At The Beacon School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates, all our areas of play are linked to learning. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are all inter connected.

Teaching and learning style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in other key stages. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

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

- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- The comfort for children that they will be able to access the Early Years curriculum to give them more time to achieve their Early Learning Goals and to be better learners by developing the characteristics of effective learning;
- All judgments made will be in the best interest of each individual child.

All pupils, regardless of age, will access the Early Years curriculum within the three Reception/ Year 1 classes.

11 Observation, assessment and planning

The planning within the EYFS follows the department's long term planning and our schemes of work which are based around termly themes. These plans are used by the teacher as a guide for weekly planning; however, the teacher may alter these in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children.

At The Beacon School, we record judgements against the EYFS profile and record observations and assessments on Evidence for Learning and Pupil Asset, the schools chosen summative assessment. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress. We give an opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher at the end of the year.

Reception Baseline Assessment

At the start of Reception all children are required to take part in the Reception Baseline Assessment, this has to be taken within the first six weeks from their start date. This also applies to any Reception children that start later on through the year as long as we are their first placement. We have resources to complete this at both provisions.

12 British Values

We introduce British Values to the pupils as we encourage them to be aware of their human rights and responsibilities.

Democracy: The EYFS supports democratic thinking through the Making Relationships strand of Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Here children are taught the benefits of developing positive relationships that support fair play and cooperation, as well as the value of participating and working collaboratively.

Rule of Law: PSED within in the EYFS also focuses on helping children to understand the need for rules, as well as consequences for themselves and others when they break those rules.

Individual Liberty: Pupils' sense of self and positive self-esteem is promoted in the EYFS under the self-confidence and self-awareness aspect of PSED.

Mutual Respect and Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs: We encourage children to value and celebrate diversity. We challenge negative and discriminatory attitudes from the earliest age to ensure children grow up to support these values and form a tolerant and cohesive future society. We endeavour to ensure our displays reflect the diversity of British society, that books and stories feature characters from a range of cultures and challenge racial and gender stereotyping. Our toys and resources reflect a range of cultures and faiths, and we celebrate festivals from a variety of faiths. Children are introduced to art and music from different cultures and stories from around the world. EAL learners are encouraged to use their first language and staff are learning words and phrases from our pupils' first languages.

13 Foundation Stage Profile

The Statutory EYFS 2025 framework requires that the EYFS Profile is carried out in the final term for the Reception year.

The purpose of the profile is to:

- Inform parents about their child's development against the Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Effective Learning;
- Support a smooth transition to Key Stage 1 by having a discussion between the EYFS and Key Stage 1 teachers;
- Help the Year 2 teacher plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all the children.

In the final term the teacher reviews all knowledge of the children to date and makes a final judgement as to whether the child's learning and development is best described by:

- The child best fits the level of development that is expected at the end of EYFS (Expected).
- Not yet at the level of development expected at the end of EYFS (Emerging)
- Beyond the level expected at the end of EYFS (Exceeding).

14 Early Learning Goals

The level of development neuro-typical children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals (ELGs) as set out below. The ELGs should not be used as a curriculum or in any way to limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are crucial to child development, from being read to frequently to playing with friends. Instead, the ELGs should support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child's development, and their readiness for Year 2.

When forming a judgement about whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, teachers should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. This is sufficient evidence to assess a child's individual level of development in relation to each of the ELGs. Sources of written or photographic evidence are not required, and teachers are not required to record evidence.

15 The characteristics of effective learning

Playing and exploring

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They can think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make choices.

Creating and thinking critically

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think."

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

The EYFS is made up of seven prime areas of learning which are split into categories:

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas:

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, based on the individual child's needs as well as targets being set from these to access during 1:1 learning boxes in ASN classes and Reception class.

16 Supervision

All staff within Early Years at The Beacon School will complete one supervision meeting per 6 week term, and records of all meetings will be kept in a lockable cupboard. A schedule for this has been devised and staff are aware of who their supervision is taking place with.

17 Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the teacher to follow the principles stated in this policy.
There is a named Governing Body Pair responsible for Curriculum and the EYFS. These governors will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.
SLT will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Appendix 1
Rationale for Organisation of Class Groupings in Zone 1

In Zone 1 there are seven classes made up of:

1. Ireland (Reception, Tier 2)
2. Sweden (Year 1, Tier 2)
3. Spain (Reception and Year 1,Tier 1)
4. Austria (ASN group)

At our satellite provision at Walmer we have 3 classes that are made up of:

1. Sholden Year R Tier 1
2. Eastry Year R and Year 1 Tier 2

The three Reception and Year 1 groups the Themes and Principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to. Every child is **unique** and follows their own special developmental pathway. All our pupils have a personalised learning plan with next steps in learning and development planned according to their specific needs. **Positive relationships** are promoted between parents and staff, staff and children and parents and children. Our environment is planned to maximise pupils' learning potential. Each class **environment** is adapted to provide experiences which respond to pupils' individual needs. All children in these class groups are allocated a Key Person who has responsibilities for monitoring their learning, development and well-being.

Most children in Reception and Year 1 at both provisions will remain within the 6 classes for a minimum of 2 years to provide them with familiar adults and to establish solid foundations for future learning.

The timetables of these classes are matched as closely as possible to allow for children to move into different classes for particular sessions, according to their strengths and difficulties.

In **Ireland, Sholden and Eastry** children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum with an emphasis on learning through exploration. Children are provided with rich learning experiences to stimulate and awaken the senses and to learn through play and playful teaching. Most of these children engage in solitary play and are learning to tolerate short spells of parallel play with adults and other children. For these children a change of staff at this young age can be unsettling. These children require a high level of continuous adult support to access all areas of the Early Years Curriculum.

In **Sweden** children follow the Early Years Curriculum with an emphasis on learning through exploration and discovery. Pupils are provided with challenging and playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas. These children can play in parallel with adults and other children and are being encouraged to initiate interactions with others. Some of these children can engage in adult-led sessions in small groups alongside their peers. They are able to engage in paired or small-group sessions for 'Little Wandle' or 'Numicon' time for short periods. Other children may require one-to-one support for adult-led sessions.

In **Spain** children follow the Early Years Curriculum with some access, as appropriate, to Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. The Early Years themes and principles continue to provide the essential underpinning for teaching and learning. Children are encouraged to develop strong characteristics of effective learning. There is an emphasis on fostering the

skills of creative and critical thinking. These children are becoming more independent and can learn alongside their peers in small groups.

Occasionally some Reception pupils make rapid progress and are predicted to achieve their ELGs in the prime areas and specific areas of Literacy and Maths by the end of the Foundation Stage. For these children, a supported transition to mainstream will be planned. Staff in these classes are experienced in supporting pupils throughout a transition plan.

Austria class is a mix of Early Years and Year 1, 2, 3 and 4 pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. They follow the ImPACTS Curriculum, modified for their individual learning styles as well as using seven aspects of engagement to help focus observations. Their EHCP targets are also used to plan appropriate learning opportunities, personalised to meet their individual needs.

Assessment and Planning in Year R/Year 1

On-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice. Observations describing how and what each child is learning is integral to our practice and helps us continuously identify where each child is on their unique developmental pathway. The key person determines the child's next steps in their learning and considers how best we can deepen and extend the child's current learning and development. The key person uses the columns within the 'Development Matters' Guidance of 'Positive Relationships' and 'Enabling Environment' to plan for next steps.

We continue this process of observing and planning through our pupils' Year R and Year 1 in Ireland, Sweden, and Spain.

The pupils within EYFS are assessed using the Ranges within the 'Birth to Five Matters' Guidance. The process of formative observational assessment continues throughout both years that a pupil is in these classes.

Ireland, Sweden, Spain, Sholden, Eastry and Austria follow a topic based long term plan and scheme of work. Our schemes of work aim to plan appropriate, meaningful, and relevant activity content within each topic. An emphasis is placed on the inter-linking of all areas of learning. Pupils are encouraged to make links in their learning. We believe that separating subject areas for our youngest pupils is not beneficial. Many of our pupils have difficulty in generalising and transferring skills from one context to another. Topic teaching supports our children in making essential links in their learning which will encourage them to become effective learners.

In Austria class the pupils are assessed using a combination of ImPACTS, MAPP, MOVE, ABLLS and Pupil Asset.

Term	Topic	Skill/s	Link to curriculum intent:
Term 1	**All about me**	Awareness of themselves and others. Experiencing transitions and change. Friendships with others New routines Introduction to school and the environment Understanding of barriers and rules Managing independence Separation from family members	PSED C and L PD U the W EA and D Mathematics Literacy
Term 2	**Sparkle and Shine**	Experiencing wider community Understanding of cultures Beginning to understand jobs and future paths. Understanding dangers Understanding celebrations and cultures e.g. Firework night, Diwali and Christmas.	PSED C and L PD U the W EA and D Mathematics Literacy
Term 3	**Animal World**	Understanding animals and how to care for them Understanding different homes and environments Habitat understanding Growing babies – adults Cultural understanding	PSED C and L PD U the W EA and D Mathematics Literacy
Term 4	**My Colourful World**	Cultural understanding of events Understanding of the weather Categorisation Colours in our world Understanding of seasons	PSED C and L PD U the W EA and D Mathematics Literacy
Term 5	**In the Garden**	Understanding of growing Understanding of where food comes from. Different flowers Minibeast differences - bugs Life cycles	PSED C and L PD U the W EA and D Mathematics Literacy
Term 6	**Once Upon a Time**	Understanding of different stories Make believe and real-life Celebrating success of ourselves and others Consolidation of skills throughout the year Sun safety Transitional changes	PSED C and L PD U the W EA and D Mathematics Literacy

Update schedule

Version	Date	Reason for Update	Next Review Date	Governors agreement
1	Sept 2016	Transfer & Review	March 2018	14.11.16
2	Jan 2018	Review	Jan 2019	22.01.19
3	Jan 2019	Review	Jan 2020	
4	Jan 2020	Review	Jan 2021	23.05.2022
5	May 2022	Review	May 2025	
6	July 2025	Review & Update	July 2024	October 2025
7	Jan 2025	Review & Update	Jan 2026	Jan 2025
8	October 2025	Review & Update	October 2026	