



Cinnamon Brow C of E Primary School

'For I know the plans I have for you... Plans to give you hope and a future.'

Jeremiah 29:11

Play Policy (whole school)

Presented to Govs:	July 2026
Adopted by FGB/Committee:	July 2029

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School Vision



*'For I know the plans I
have for you...plans
to give you hope
& a future'
Jeremiah 29:11*

This verse was God's word to the Israelites given by the prophet Jeremiah. The Israelites were in a time of desperation as captives. In Jeremiah 29:10, Jeremiah speaks God's word to the Israelites. He specifies that God will fulfil his promise after 70 years of exile. They would have a real time of difficulty but they had God's hope of a future to see them through.

God gave the Israelites a hope that their future would be bright. This is our aim for our school community: children, parents, governors, staff and local community. By providing an excellent well-rounded education, we will give our pupils and their families hope for their future, by enabling them to flourish.

The vision for our school is underpinned by the
Church of England's Vision for Education

1

Educating for
wisdom,
knowledge
and skills

2

Educating for
hope and
aspiration

3

Educating for
community
and living
well together

4

Educating for
dignity and
respect



1. Commitment

At Cinnamon Brow CE Primary School we recognise that play is an essential part of a happy and healthy childhood and supports children to thrive. Our school's Christian vision is to support our whole school community through providing hope and a future. We firmly believe that through play, we can support the development of the whole child which we know will help to ensure a bright future.

Our commitment to play will ensure that we provide consistently high quality, sustainable and inclusive and enjoyable play experiences for all children across school. We will do this by providing carefully considered outdoor spaces, play structures and resources that offer a rich choice of accessible play experiences for every child. We will refer to our school's vision and this play policy in all decisions that affect our children's play. Our school is committed to providing the strategic and operational leadership needed to provide and maintain quality play provision for all of our children.

We provide a wide range of balanced learning opportunities in a caring and stimulating environment; this extends to the learning and positive experiences that can be achieved at play times. We aim to seek the maximum potential development of each individual and look for high all-round achievement in all aspects of a child's development.

2. Rationale

At Cinnamon Brow CE Primary School, we acknowledge Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that 'a child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.' We believe that all children need opportunities to play which allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. We believe play provision should be welcoming and accessible to every child, irrespective of gender, economic or social circumstances, ethnic or cultural background or origin, or individual abilities.

At Cinnamon Brow CE Primary School, we seek to attain the highest standard for all our children, in all aspects of school life. With children spending up to 20% or 1.4 years of their time in school at play, it is vital that there is a coherent plan in place for this time that is well thought out. The current climate and ever-changing society have meant that there is more traffic on roads, people have busier lifestyles, there are few areas for play and the awareness of risk has led children to having less time, space and permission for play in the wider public realm. The recent covid pandemic has exasperated this situation. This makes their play opportunities at school even more vital.

Parents continue to see play as a vital part of their child's school experience with many choosing the school because of the play offer. In 2022 near the beginning of our OPAL journey, 92% of parents/carers believed that playtimes are of the highest importance for them and their children. The majority of reasons linked to opportunities to play, relax and socialise with their friends and children from across the age ranges. Our play policy supports increasing opportunities for wider, creative play, freedom to relax and explore and to enrich and support friendships, helping to create the ideal opportunity to develop social skills.

Children across the school continue to enjoy having greater freedom and opportunities to build, dig, create and explore the whole school outdoor environment. We therefore believe



that it is important to maximise our use of the grounds we have and to invest in high quality play resources to fulfil our school's aims of creating a secure environment where children can play in peace and happiness alongside one another and approach their world of joy and wonder, seeing childhood as a place in its own right and not just a preparation for the next stage of life.

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, have autonomy, take risks and learn to problem solve.

Our play policy aims to support all of these areas of development.

3. Definition and value of play

Play is recognised for the important contribution it makes to education and lifelong learning; a finding confirmed by many studies of early childhood. The contribution of play to educational development is suggested through the inherent value of different play types, e.g. through risk taking and exploratory playing, allowing children to experiment, try new things and push their boundaries in a secure environment.

At Cinnamon Brow, we believe that children should have the opportunity to experience different types of play (see Appendix 1 'Best Play – Play Types'). By having these opportunities, our children will have the potential to reap the many benefits that play has.

The United Nation's Committee on the Rights of the Child defines play as: "any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves; it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise. Caregivers may contribute to the creation of environments in which play takes place, but play itself is non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation and undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end".

Better quality play leads to happier children and happier staff. With better quality play opportunities/ there are fewer behaviour problems, a more positive attitude to school and improved skills development and learning. As the children improve their quality of play and have more enriching play times, there are fewer accidents and classroom learning is enhanced as the children come in from play happy and ready to learn.

At Cinnamon Brow, the children and staff think that:

- Play is fun, voluntary and relaxing
- Play provides opportunities to develop decision-making, risk-taking and problem-solving
- Play enhances children's self-esteem and helps to develop social skills through their freely chosen social interactions, within peer groups, with individuals, and within groups of different ages, abilities, interests, genders, ethnicities and cultures.
- Play requires ongoing communication and negotiation skills, enabling children to develop a balance between their right to act freely and their responsibilities to others.
- Play enables children to experience a wide range of emotions and develop their ability to cope with these – learning to self-regulate.



- Play provides the freedom to be creative. Their imagination can have no boundaries and they are able to shine.
- Play maintains children's openness to learning, develops their capabilities and allows them to push the boundaries of what they can achieve.

At Cinnamon Brow, we expect to see children den-making, digging in sand and mud, climbing trees and taking part in rough and tumble play.

4. Aims

In relation to play our school aims to:

- Ensure that children have access to a wide range of opportunities for play which they enjoy.
- Ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment, which encourage children to explore, learn about and process the world around them.
- Allow children to take risks and use a balanced approach to the management of these risks and their benefits.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other, but also for play to be co-operative or solitary.
- Enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.
- Aid children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Promote self-regulation, independence and teamwork within children.
- Build emotional and physical resilience amongst our children.
- Ensure that children have a right to play with anything they choose from the playground resources, as long as it is reasonably safe for them to do so, regardless of age, gender, social or cultural background.
- Encourage adults to be responsive to children's invitations and requests, and to carry out dynamic risk-benefit assessments to weigh up the risk and benefits of play activities and develop the children's risk awareness.

5. Benefit and risk

At Cinnamon Brow, we believe play has many benefits, including:

- Play enhances children's self-esteem and their understanding of others through freely chosen social interactions, within peer groups, individuals and within groups of different ages, abilities, interests, genders, ethnicities and cultures.
- Play requires ongoing communication and negotiation skills, enabling children to develop a balance between their right to act freely and their responsibilities to others.
- Play enables children to experience a wide range of emotions and develop their ability to cope with these, including sadness and happiness, rejection and acceptance, frustration and achievement, boredom and fascination, fear and confidence.
- Play encourages self-confidence and the ability to make choices; problem solve and to be creative.
- Play maintains children's openness to learning, develops their capabilities and allows them to push the boundaries of what they can achieve.

We commit to providing the children of Cinnamon Brow with all the benefits of play, whilst managing any risks involved. Our play provision aims to offer children the chance to



encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and managed play environment. In the words of the play sector publication 'Best Play', play provision should aim to *'manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children and young people safe from harm'*. Many research studies have found that the social, physical and mental benefits to children of managed risks are vast. Children become more resilient, adaptable and are keen to try new experiences.

We will use the Health and Safety Executive guidance *'Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach'* (Appendix 2) as the principal document informing our approach to managing risk in play. In doing so, we will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in 'Managing Risk in Play Provision': An Implementation Guide. In addition to written risk assessments, the school will practice dynamic risk-benefit management with children encouraging them to identify and manage risks in an environment where adults are present to support them.

We strongly believe that our role as play providers is to facilitate the maximum number of enriching opportunities for children to encounter. They need to learn to manage risk for themselves in an environment that is as safe as it needs to be, rather than completely devoid of risk. We believe that this helps them to thrive and develop as well-rounded young people who are ready for the next stage of their future.

6. Supervision

At Cinnamon Brow, we understand the importance of appropriate supervision during play times. The law requires that children in school have supervision, but for primary school playtimes there are no stated adult to children ratios. During the school day there should be one or more adults present outdoors.

At Cinnamon Brow, we will use OPAL's three models of supervision: Direct, Remote and Ranging. To allow children to make full use of our school grounds, direct supervision is not always possible or beneficial. Whilst direct supervision will be initially used for our youngest children starting school, the majority of our playtime supervision will take remote and ranging models, so that children can quickly find an adult, and adults can patrol large sites to gain an awareness of the kinds of play and levels of risk likely to be emerging.

Our school grounds will be divided into supervision zones with an adult patrolling each area. A member of the school leadership team will be present as an additional 'floating' member of staff having an overview of the whole site and to offer support in a specific area if necessary. Adults within each zone will communicate via walkie-talkies and a fixed first aid area will be used for any accidents.

7. The adult's role in play

At Cinnamon Brow, we, as an entire staff, are fully committed to working with children to provide the play experiences that they want and need in their school. We will have a continuing dialogue with children about the play provision in the playground, led by our school parliament, which will aim to further develop their playtime experiences using their voice and opinions as guidance.

We will help children maximise the benefits they can gain from play, by training our play team to work in accordance with the Playwork Principles. Staff will use and refer to these principles when appropriate interventions are needed and ultimately will strive for facilitating an environment which nurtures children's self-directed play.



The play team's role will be to facilitate play and encourage children to assess the risks and benefits of activities within the play setting. We are working with OPAL to help guide a strategic approach to developing our play times. Our Play Team (Appendix 4) will work in collaboration with parents, teachers, teaching assistants, MDAs and all other staff as well as the children to implement the changes highlighted in this policy. The play team will ensure that the broadest possible range of play opportunities are available to children: to observe, reflect and analyse the play that is happening and make a change to the play space if needed. The play team will ensure that the play space is inclusive – supporting all children to make the most of the opportunities available in their own way.

8. Children's role in Play

At Cinnamon Brow, we believe that it is equally as important for children to have a say in their play. The children have contributed to this policy and have also developed a Play Charter (Appendix 5) which summarises some of the key aspects of this policy.

It will include the rights and responsibilities of the children to:

- Have ownership of their play and outdoor learning experiences
- Respect and look after each other, their environment, play structures and resources
- To be aware of sanctions surrounding purposely dangerous or unsafe behaviour
- Ensure that all children enjoy their right to play.
- Be Heartsmart in all that they do

This children's play charter will be shared and explained to all children regularly as part of ongoing assemblies, discussions and dialogue in class and with School Parliament.

9. Environment

At Cinnamon Brow, we believe that a rich play setting should ensure that all children have access to stimulating environments that are free from unacceptable/unnecessary risks and thereby offer children the opportunity to explore for themselves through their freely chosen play.

We will strive to continually improve the quality and diversity of our school's grounds to enhance play. We will use the document 'Best Play – Criteria for an enriched play environment' to guide us on what a quality play environment should contain (Appendix 3).

At Cinnamon Brow, we will:

- Use the outdoor space as a natural resource for playing and learning, encouraging the children to value natural or found objects for play
- Include the children's views and opinions when planning for play and learning outdoors
- Ensure that the outdoor area offers all children the opportunity to investigate, take risks and explore and use their imagination and creativity
- Expect the children to respect the outdoor environment and care for living things
- Enrich the quality of the environment to maximise variety of play types and increase play value
- Ensure that the school grounds be an integrated area where all children from Reception* to Year 6 can play together and alongside each other
- Teach the children their responsibilities with regard to maintaining the quality of their outdoor space, and the resources available and ensure they take an active part in doing this.
- Promote children's pride for the outdoor space that belongs to them.



*From Summer term onwards

Appendix 1

'Best Play' – Play Types (pages 33 to 34)

<http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/bestplay.pdf>

Appendix 2

'Health & Safety Executive: Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting A Balanced Approach'

[Children's play and leisure: promoting a balanced approach - HSE](#)

Appendix 3

'Best Play' – Criteria for an Enriched Play Environment (page 35)

<http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/bestplay.pdf>

Appendix 4

OPAL working group

This is the team works at a strategic level to ensure this policy is put into practice and that careful consideration is given to play times as an essential part of the school day.

The Head Teacher –	Rachel Pimblett
Curricular Lead for Play –	Rachel Pimblett supported by Natalie Quinn & Clare Bostock
Play Co-ordinator -	Cathy Wareing, Rachel Sixsmith and Sarah Ruth
Play Champion Governor –	Nicola Glynn
Play Champion Parents -	Parents' Forum
Admin team –	- Haley Carman

Play Team (supervising staff)

All adults working at the school are part of the play team and have a responsibility to follow this policy. When on the playground at playtimes, all staff should act as 'Play Makers'.

However, more specifically at lunch times the following structure exists:

Play Co-ordinator

Cathy Wareing & Rachel Sixsmith and Sarah Ruth
(Lead on operational delivery and resourcing)

Play Makers

Julie, Lisa Risley, Michelle Hignett, Toria Akinyemi-Hughes and the class teaching assistants
(Support children's' play)

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Appendix 5

Children's Play Charter

We have the right to play at playtimes. We have the responsibility to respect that all children enjoy their right to play. We are a school community who believe that 'Too much selfie isn't healthy'. Nobody's play is more important than anyone else's.

We have the right to make our own decisions about our play and choose what we do. We have the responsibility to make sure our decisions don't affect others in a negative way.

We have the right to choose who we play with. We have the responsibility to make sure that no one is forced to do something they don't want to. We want to see everyone involved, playing together – all ages. We are inclusive.

We have the right to play with lots of different things and have a well looked after environment. Respecting that right means taking good care of the things we play with and the spaces in which we play.

We have the right to explore, be creative and take thoughtful risks. We must therefore think about what we are doing and talk to one of the play team about the risks we are taking if they ask us too.

We have the right to explore the full grounds.* We have the responsibility to be sensible and be Heartsmart.

If a member of the play team asks us to stop what we are doing because they think something may be dangerous, and/or disruptive, we must stop and discuss how we can play in a way that is less dangerous and/or disruptive.

*except the back forest school area