

Planning Statement

Site:	Caretakers Bungalow, The Bulmershe School
Proposal:	Change of use from Residential (C3) to Educational (F1) to provide an Alternative Provision (AP) Unit/Nurture Unit, including minor external alterations.



Figure 1 - Google Earth Image showing the Bungalow in context with adjoining housing and the school site

1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of The Bulmershe School to support a full planning application for the conversion of the existing, unused caretaker's bungalow into a specialist Alternative Provision (AP) Nurture Unit.

The proposal aims to reuse an existing unused building within the school curtilage to provide essential support for pupils with complex educational, social, and emotional needs.

This facility will enable these pupils to remain within a mainstream school environment, supporting the overall functioning of The Bulmershe School.

2.0 Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises a vacant single-story building formerly used as a caretaker's bungalow, situated within the wider Bulmershe School site.

The site is located to the east of Reading, within Woodley. The bungalow is situated in a sustainable location, within the existing school boundaries, facilitating easy access to the main school infrastructure.

The building is currently unused, representing an opportunity to bring a brownfield asset back into productive educational use.

3.0 The Proposed Development

The proposed development involves the conversion of the existing bungalow into an AP unit to be used by small groups of children, providing a safe, calm area for a tailored programme of activities.

Internal Alterations: Remodelling of the internal layout to create classrooms, sensory/calm rooms, a small staff area, and accessible toilet facilities.

External Alterations: Minor enhancements to the building's exterior to ensure it is suitable for educational use, including potential replacement of doors/windows to match school standards.

Operation: The unit will operate during school hours and will be managed as an integral part of The Bulmershe School.

4.0 Planning Policy and Principles

The application should be considered in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which outlines a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools.

Local planning authorities are encouraged to take a proactive approach to opening and expanding schools to meet local needs.

The proposal complies with the development plan as it:

- Utilises Brownfield Land: Converts an existing, underutilized structure.
- Supports Education Needs: Provides essential on-site Alternative Provision, reducing the need for out-of-borough placements.
- Maintains Amenity: As a single-story building within the school grounds, the change of use will not adversely affect the residential amenity of neighboring properties.

5.0 Planning Considerations

Need for Development: The school requires this additional accommodation to support students with complex needs, allowing them to engage in learning.

Layout and Access: The existing access points to the school will be used. The unit will offer a secure, enclosed space that provides separation from the main school, offering a nurturing environment.

Traffic and Parking: The proposal will not result in a significant increase in traffic generation or parking demand, as the children are already enrolled at the school, and staff will be relocated from within the main site.

Design: The external alterations will be in keeping with the scale and character of the existing bungalow.

6.0 Conclusion

The proposed conversion of the caretaker's bungalow into an AP unit at The Bulmershe School represents sustainable development that directly supports the educational, social, and emotional needs of the pupil population.

The proposal complies with local and national policies aimed at promoting education and bringing redundant buildings back into beneficial use.