

# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy



Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:

## 1. Policy Statement

At our school, we believe that strong foundations create strong learners.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a unique and important stage of education where children develop the knowledge, skills, dispositions and attitudes that provide the foundations for future learning, wellbeing and success.

Our curriculum is built around five Strong Foundations:

Relationships • Readiness to Learn • Resilience • Real-Life Experiences • Reading

These foundations underpin our inclusive, ambitious and adaptable curriculum, ensuring that every child is supported to develop from their individual starting point.

We recognise that children develop at different rates and that every child brings their own experiences, interests, strengths and needs. Our curriculum therefore provides appropriate support, challenge and adaptation so that all children can participate, belong, achieve and thrive.

We are committed to providing high-quality interactions, intentional teaching and meaningful experiences that enable children to develop deep knowledge and understanding.

Our approach is strengthened through the SHREC approach to adult interactions, which supports practitioners to make the most of everyday learning opportunities, develop children's language and thinking, and integrate intentional teaching to tailorise learning that responds to individual needs.

### *Writing Framework July 2025*

*Children's first encounters with language are typically through talk; human brains are naturally wired to speak. They depend on interactions with adults to develop their speech and, through exposure to stories and back-and-forth talk, they develop control over their spoken language. This, in turn, is vital for learning about written language, since reading and writing are acquired skills.*

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## 2. Statutory and Curriculum Framework

This policy is based on the current:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, effective from 1 September 2026.
- Development Matters: Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS.
- The Writing Framework
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0–25 years.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- The school's safeguarding, behaviour, inclusion, SEND and health and safety policies.
- Early Years Foundation Nutritional Guidance May 2025

The EYFS statutory framework sets the standards that schools must meet to ensure children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. This also supports The Nutritional Guidance.

Development Matters is non-statutory guidance which supports practitioners to design an effective curriculum, build on children's strengths and meet their individual needs. It does not replace professional judgement.

The SEND Code of Practice provides statutory guidance for schools and early years providers in supporting children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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### 3. Our Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is designed to give every child the best possible start.

We want children to become:

- Confident communicators.
- Curious and motivated learners.
- Resilient and independent.
- Kind and respectful.
- Successful collaborators.
- Creative thinkers.
- Problem-solvers.
- Knowledgeable about themselves and the world around them.
- Enthusiastic readers and storytellers.
- Ready for the next stage of their learning.

Our curriculum is ambitious for every child while recognising that equity does not mean every child receives the same provision.

Children may require different levels of support, different resources, different communication methods, additional time or different ways of accessing learning.

Our curriculum is therefore inclusive by design and adaptable in practice.

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### 4. Our Strong Foundations

Our strong foundations underpin the four main principles outlined in the Early Years Statutory Framework.

- *Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.*
- *Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.*
- *Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.*
- *Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates.*

#### 4.1 Relationships

Positive relationships are at the heart of our EYFS practice.

Children need to feel safe, secure, valued and understood before they can fully engage in learning.

Practitioners build warm, respectful and responsive relationships with children and families. Adults take time to understand each child's:

- Personality.
- Interests.
- Strengths.
- Communication.
- Experiences.
- Individual needs.
- Emotional wellbeing.

We support children to develop positive relationships with adults and peers and to understand how their behaviour and actions affect others in-line with the school behaviour policy and promote the school values of Respect, Independence, Challenge, Pride and Resilience.

Strong relationships create the emotional security children need to explore, communicate, take risks, make mistakes and learn. Even though we know this is not a statutory requirement, we recognise the importance of developing these early relationships from the beginning in pre-school. We expect children to attend all of their sessions and attendance has a high priority from the beginning. As well as supporting relationships it supports every child's personal and social development, trust and attachment, learning behaviors and regulation from a young age.

If a child does not attend for two sessions and we have not been notified of the absence for any reason, a member of our pre-school will make a phone call for reasoning of the absence, and this will be recorded. A child who is ill/absent should be reported in line with the school attendance policy.

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## **5. Readiness to Learn**

Readiness to learn is developed through secure relationships, emotional wellbeing, communication and meaningful experiences.

We develop children's readiness through opportunities to:

- Listen and concentrate.
- Communicate – using Wellcomm as an assessment tool.
- Follow routines.
- Make choices.
- Become increasingly independent.
- Manage emotions.
- Develop self-regulation.
- Persevere.
- Solve problems.
- Engage with others.
- Develop positive attitudes towards learning.

We do not view readiness as a checklist of skills that children must possess before they can learn. Instead, we identify what each child needs in order to access learning successfully and adapt our provision accordingly.

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## 6. Resilience

We want children to develop the confidence to have a go, persevere and try again.

Adults model resilience and positive attitudes towards mistakes, challenge and problem-solving.

Children are encouraged to:

- Try different approaches.
- Persist when learning is difficult.
- Learn from mistakes.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Take appropriate risks.
- Develop independence.
- Celebrate effort and achievement.
- Reflect on their learning.

Adults provide the right level of support and challenge, gradually reducing support as children's confidence and competence develop.

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## 7. Real-Life Experiences

We believe children develop deep understanding when learning is meaningful, purposeful and connected to real life.

Our curriculum provides rich first-hand experiences including:

- Cooking and baking.
- Gardening and growing.
- Outdoor learning.
- Exploring nature.
- Visits and visitors.
- Community experiences.
- Role play.
- Caring for living things.
- Everyday routines and healthy lifestyles in line with Nutritional Guidance and Safer Eating in the Early Years Statutory Framework.
- Celebrations and cultural experiences.
- Practical problem-solving.
- Regard for screen time and its impact upon learning.

Real-life experiences provide authentic opportunities for children to develop vocabulary, knowledge, mathematical thinking, communication, independence and understanding of the world.

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## **8. Reading**

Reading is a fundamental part of our curriculum.

We develop a love of books, stories, rhymes and language from the beginning of children's time in our setting.

High-quality texts are carefully selected to:

- Develop vocabulary.
- Build knowledge.
- Reflect children's experiences.
- Introduce children to experiences beyond their own.
- Develop imagination.
- Support emotional understanding.
- Promote discussion.
- Develop comprehension.
- Inspire role play and creativity.

Stories and books are woven throughout the curriculum and provide a foundation for learning across all seven areas.

We recognise that talk, stories and rich language experiences are fundamental to early literacy development. Development Matters and the writing framework places strong emphasis on communication and language as a foundation for thinking and learning and oracy. Wellcomm supports the development and stage of each individual for their communication which supports early identification to support speech, language and communication needs

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## **9. The EYFS Areas of Learning**

Our curriculum meets the educational programmes within the EYFS statutory framework through the seven areas of learning and development.

### **Prime Areas**

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

### **Specific Areas**

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

The prime areas are particularly important in supporting children's development and provide foundations for learning across the wider curriculum.

The seven areas remain the statutory areas of learning within the EYFS framework.

We recognise that learning is interconnected and therefore do not teach the seven areas in isolation.

For example, a cooking experience may develop:

**Communication and Language** – vocabulary and conversation

**Mathematics** – counting, measuring and comparison

**Physical Development** – fine motor skills

**Literacy** – following instructions and reading recipes

**Understanding the World** – changes to materials

**PSED** – independence and cooperation

**Expressive Arts and Design** – creativity and presentation

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## 10. SHREC: High-Quality Adult Interactions

High-quality adult interactions are fundamental to our approach.

The SHREC approach supports adults to maximise children's learning through everyday interactions.

Practitioners are encouraged to:

**Share Attention:** Join children in what they are interested in and establish shared attention.

**Respond:** Notice children's communication and respond sensitively and meaningfully.

**Expand:** Extend children's language, ideas, knowledge and understanding.

**Comment:** Use commentary to model language and make learning visible without unnecessarily interrupting children's play.

**Have Conversations:** Engage children in meaningful back-and-forth interactions that develop communication, thinking and reasoning.

SHREC strengthens intentional teaching by helping practitioners recognise opportunities within children's play, routines and real-life experiences.

Adults carefully consider:

**When should I observe?**

**When should I join?**

**When should I model?**

**When should I challenge?**

**When should I step back?**

This ensures that adult interactions are purposeful while protecting children's opportunities for independent exploration and child-initiated learning.

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## **11. Intentional Teaching**

Intentional teaching is embedded within our curriculum.

Practitioners deliberately identify important knowledge, vocabulary, skills and concepts that children need to learn.

Teaching may include:

- Modelling.
- Demonstration.
- Explicit teaching.
- Guided play.
- Storytelling.
- Repetition.
- Questioning.
- Conversation.
- Small-group teaching.
- Individual teaching.
- Revisiting previous learning.
- Enhancing continuous provision.

Intentional teaching does not mean directing children's learning at all times.

We carefully balance:

**Child-Initiated Learning**

**Adult-Guided Learning**

**Intentional Teaching**

This ensures children have sufficient time to explore, practise, investigate and develop their own ideas while benefiting from knowledgeable adult support. This also supports the Rosenshine principles in-line with the rest of the school and new guidance which outlines the use of screentime in early Years

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## **12. Tailorised Learning**

We use the term tailorised learning to describe our commitment to adapting intentional teaching to meet individual needs while maintaining ambitious expectations.

We recognise that children may require different pathways to reach shared learning intentions.

Practitioners adapt:

- Resources.
- Language.
- Questioning.
- Group size.
- Adult support.
- Environment.

- Sensory experiences.
- Communication systems.
- Processing time.
- Level of challenge.
- Expected outcomes.
- Ways children demonstrate their learning.

Tailorised learning enables children to experience appropriate challenge without creating unnecessary barriers. Our aim is not to lower expectations but to remove barriers so that children can achieve them.

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### 13. SEND and Inclusion

Inclusion is integral to our EYFS curriculum.

We follow the principles of the SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years, which places emphasis on early identification, appropriate support, partnership with parents and a graduated approach to meeting children's needs.

We follow a graduated approach:

**Assess:** Identify strengths, needs, barriers and starting points.

**Plan:** Agree appropriate adaptations, targets and strategies.

**Do:** Implement support consistently through everyday teaching and provision.

**Review:** Evaluate impact and adjust provision according to children's progress and changing needs.

Children with SEND are fully included in the life of the setting.

Where children have an EHCP, individual support plans or specific professional recommendations, these are incorporated into everyday learning wherever possible.

We work closely with:

- Parents and carers.
- SENCO.
- Teachers.
- Teaching assistants.
- Early Years specialists.
- Speech and language therapists.
- Health professionals.
- Educational psychologists.
- Local authority services.
- Other relevant agencies.

We recognise that early identification and early intervention can prevent gaps in development from widening. Development Matters emphasises the importance of identifying SEND quickly and providing children with the additional help they need. Wellcomm is an assessment tool we use to identify gaps in children's communication and understanding. Assessments take place in the first half-term with us.

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## 14. Communication and Language

Communication is central to our curriculum.

We provide a language-rich environment where adults:

- Model high-quality language.
- Introduce ambitious vocabulary.
- Respond to children's communication.
- Give children time to process and respond.
- Use repetition.
- Revisit vocabulary.
- Encourage conversations.
- Model sentences.
- Use stories and rhymes.
- Support alternative and augmentative communication where required.

We recognise that children communicate in different ways and communication is tailorised to meet the needs of the individual child.

Children may use:

- Speech.
- Gestures.
- Facial expressions.
- Objects.
- Symbols.
- Visuals.
- Sign language.
- Communication aids.

Every child's method of communication is valued.

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## 15. Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All staff understand their statutory safeguarding responsibilities and follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

The EYFS statutory framework requires schools to ensure that children are kept healthy and safe, and the current framework includes strengthened safeguarding and welfare requirements.

Our safeguarding practice includes:

- Safer recruitment.
- Appropriate staff suitability checks.
- Designated safeguarding leadership.
- Staff safeguarding training.
- Safer working practices.

- Appropriate supervision.
- Risk assessment
- Attendance monitoring.
- Health and safety procedures; including safer sleep policy and following Nutritional Guidance in EYFS.
- Online safety.
- Appropriate intimate care arrangements.
- Safe use of the learning environment.
- Information sharing where appropriate.
- Clear reporting procedures.
- Whistleblowing arrangements.
- Partnership with families and external agencies.

Staff must remain alert to signs that a child may be experiencing abuse, neglect or other safeguarding concerns.

Any concern must be reported immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding takes priority over curriculum planning or assessment.

## **16. The Learning Environment**

Our environment is designed to be:

Inclusive • Accessible • Language-rich • Stimulating • Safe • Adaptable • Purposeful

Resources are carefully selected to encourage:

- Independence.
- Communication.
- Exploration.
- Creativity.
- Collaboration.
- Problem-solving.
- Physical development.
- Imaginative play.
- Knowledge development.

The environment is continually reviewed in response to children's needs and interests.

The outdoor environment is an extension of the classroom and provides valuable opportunities for real-life experiences, physical development, exploration and communication.

## **17. Assessment**

Assessment is used to understand children's development and inform teaching.

We use:

- Professional observation.

- Conversations.
- Interactions.
- Children's work and creations.
- Information from parents.
- Information from previous settings.
- Professional reports.
- Assessment checkpoints where appropriate.

Assessment is not used as a checklist or to create unnecessary paperwork.

Development Matters emphasises that professional judgement should guide assessment and that depth of learning is more important than simply moving children through age-related bands.

We use assessment to answer three key questions:

**What does the child know and understand?**

**What can the child do?**

**What do they need to learn next?**

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## **18. Progress and Achievement**

We consider progress in relation to each child's individual starting point.

We recognise that progress may look different for every child.

For some children, progress may be demonstrated through:

- Increased independence.
- Improved communication.
- Greater engagement.
- Developing relationships.
- Increased attention.
- Improved self-regulation.
- Increased confidence.
- Developing physical skills.
- Applying previously learned knowledge.
- Increased resilience.

We celebrate all meaningful progress while maintaining high aspirations for every child.

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## **19. Partnership with Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers are children's first and most important educators.

We develop strong partnerships by:

- Sharing information about children's learning.
- Listening to parents' knowledge of their child.
- Sharing achievements.

- Supporting learning at home.
- Working together to identify concerns.
- Involving parents in SEND support.
- Supporting transitions.
- Celebrating children's progress.

Where additional support is required, parents are involved at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

Regular attendance is essential to children's progress, wellbeing and sense of belonging. The school works proactively with families to promote good attendance from the earliest stage of a child's education.

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## **20. Transition**

We recognise that transitions can be significant experiences for young children and parents.

Our transition arrangements aim to build relationships with the child and parents from the very beginning.

Transition is personalised according to children's needs and may include:

- Visits.
- Transition books.
- Photographs.
- Familiarisation activities.
- Meetings with parents.
- Information sharing.
- Additional visits.
- Multi-agency meetings.
- Individual transition plans.

We work closely with receiving schools and professionals to ensure important information about children's strengths, needs, interests and achievements is shared appropriately.

As each academic year ends, EYFS and Year 1 staff work collaboratively to ensure curriculum continuity and maintain high expectations for communication, language, phonics, handwriting and early mathematics.

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## **21. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring the EYFS meets statutory requirements.
- Providing appropriate resources and staffing.
- Ensuring safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- Supporting high-quality teaching and learning.
- Monitoring the quality of EYFS provision.
- Ensuring appropriate professional development.
- Ensuring SEND and inclusion are embedded within EYFS practice.

### **EYFS Leader**

The EYFS Leader is responsible for:

- Leading and developing the EYFS curriculum.
- Ensuring curriculum intent is implemented effectively.
- Monitoring children's progress.
- Supporting high-quality SHREC interactions.
- Monitoring inclusion and adaptations.
- Supporting staff development.
- Ensuring assessment is appropriate and proportionate.
- Evaluating the impact of the curriculum.
- Supporting transition arrangements.
- Working with the SENCO and other professionals.

## **SENCO**

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Coordinating SEND provision.
- Supporting early identification.
- Working with families and external agencies.
- Supporting staff to implement adaptations.
- Monitoring SEND provision and outcomes.
- Ensuring EHCP and individual targets are reflected in provision.
- Supporting the Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycle.

## **EYFS Practitioners**

All practitioners are responsible for:

- Building positive relationships.
- Providing high-quality interactions.
- Using the SHREC approach.
- Delivering intentional teaching.
- Knowing individual children well.
- Adapting learning appropriately.
- Supporting inclusion.
- Observing and assessing children's development.
- Promoting communication and language.
- Maintaining a safe and stimulating environment.
- Identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Working positively with families.
- Reflecting on and improving their practice.

## **All Staff**

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Safeguard children.
  - Promote equality and inclusion.
  - Follow school policies and procedures.
  - Maintain professional conduct.
  - Promote children's wellbeing.
  - Contribute to a positive learning environment.
  - Support the school's vision for strong foundations.
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## **22. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The quality of EYFS provision is monitored through:

- Learning walks.
- Observations of adult interactions.
- SHREC monitoring.
- Environment audits.
- Planning reviews.
- Work scrutiny.
- Assessment information.
- Pupil voice.
- Parent/carer feedback.
- Staff reflection.
- SEND provision reviews.
- Professional development.
- Progress and attainment information.

Monitoring focuses on impact rather than compliance.

Leaders consider whether children are:

- Learning.
- Developing.
- Making progress.
- Engaged.
- Included.
- Becoming increasingly independent.
- Developing strong foundations for future learning.

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## **23. Impact of Our Curriculum**

Our curriculum will have the greatest impact when children leave the EYFS with:

- Strong and positive relationships.
- Confidence and self-esteem.
- Resilience.
- Independence.
- Effective communication skills.
- A love of books and stories.
- Rich vocabulary.
- Secure foundational knowledge.
- Positive attitudes towards learning.
- The ability to engage with others.
- A developing understanding of themselves and the world.
- The confidence to try, explore and make mistakes.
- The foundations needed for their next stage of education.

Leaders expect pupils to make strong progress from their starting points and be well prepared for Year 1 through secure development in communication and language, early reading, writing and number.

We want every child to leave our EYFS knowing:

**“I belong. I am valued. I can communicate. I can learn. I can have a go. I can overcome challenges. I am ready for my next chapter.”**

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## **24. Our EYFS Commitment**

### **Strong Foundations for Lifelong Learning**

**Relationships** give children security and belonging.

**Readiness to Learn** develops positive learning behaviours.

**Resilience** enables children to persevere and overcome challenges.

**Real-Life Experiences** make learning meaningful and memorable.

**Reading** develops language, imagination, knowledge and a lifelong love of learning.

Through an inclusive and adaptable curriculum, strengthened by SHREC interactions, intentional teaching and tailorised learning, we ensure that every child has the opportunity to make progress, deepen their understanding and develop the knowledge and skills they need for their future.

We believe that:

When children have strong foundations, they are ready to build, ready to learn and ready to thrive.

## Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

| Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS                                                                                                               | Where can it be found?                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Safeguarding policy and procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safer sleep</li> <li>- Attendance</li> <li>- Intimate care policy</li> </ul> | Safeguarding Policy for Children<br>See Safer Sleep Policy<br>School Attendance Policy<br>Intimate care policy |
| Nutritional Guidance                                                                                                                                     | See Whole School Food policy                                                                                   |
| Procedure for responding to illness                                                                                                                      | See health and safety policy<br>School Attendance Policy                                                       |
| Administering medicines policy                                                                                                                           | See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy                                                           |
| Emergency evacuation procedure                                                                                                                           | See health and safety policy                                                                                   |
| Procedure for checking the identity of visitors                                                                                                          | See child protection and safeguarding policy                                                                   |
| Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children                                                                              | See child protection and safeguarding policy                                                                   |
| Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints                                                                                                       | See complaints policy                                                                                          |