

# Ethelbert Road Primary School



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

**Together We Thrive**

|                    |                     |                      |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Reviewed           | September 2026      |                      |
| Next Review        | September 2029      |                      |
| Headteacher        | Michele Kirkbride   | Date: September 2026 |
| Chair of Governors | Jonathan Richardson | Date:                |

## Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- To help each child recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

## Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

## Structure of the EYFS

- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Aim to develop close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

## Curriculum

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

The prime areas are;

- Communication and Language – Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships

- Physical Development – Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

**The specific areas are:**

- Literacy – Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers and Numerical Patterns
- Understanding the World – Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World
- Expressive Arts and Design – Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Reception teacher plans activities within Reception classroom with these in mind. They 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'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, • and enjoy achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas; make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

### **Teaching Strategies**

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible. By the summer term in Reception, the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1. Play Learning through play is an important part of our Reception classroom. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They 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 experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots, we focus on our topic work, maths, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc. Reading as a whole, plays an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. As well as a daily Whole Class Read session, there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times.

Every child has their own book bag and has a designated day when they will have a group reading session. There are also times within the week for one-to-one sharing of books with an adult.

## **Planning**

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and therefore we find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. We carefully select topics that will be fun and engaging for the children and where possible, link to the whole school creative curriculum cycle. We start each topic with a hook to capture the children's interest and provide a range of activities to encourage a thirst for learning. We also learn about festivals and celebrations to develop our understanding of the world. Staff plan on a weekly basis and use daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to. Planning is flexible and responsive to children's needs therefore can be changed and adapted to suit the children's learning and interests. Through a combination of teacher input and continuous provision opportunities, learning is planned to encourage children to develop their learning independently through exploration and challenge.

## **Impact**

The impact of our curriculum is measured by how effectively it helps our pupils develop into well-rounded individuals who embody our values and carry with them the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them lifelong learners and valuable future citizens. We endeavour for pupils to be Key Stage 1 ready and have our school values embedded by the time they leave Reception, preparing them for their future. A child at Ethelbert Road:

- Has a love of learning and enjoys a challenge.
- Shows respect for themselves and others, has good manners and follows rules.
- Is an independent learner who perseveres and is resilient.
- Has good relationships with adults and peers and co-operates as part of a team.
- Has a sense of wellbeing and can lead a safe, fulfilling and healthy life.
- Is a motivated, confident, determined and ambitious individual.

- Is literate and a good communicator.
- Is responsible and respectful to the environment and to property.
- Is tolerant, challenges stereotypes, and is morally and spiritually aware.
- Has secure values and beliefs and has a strong sense of self.
- Knows how learning fits in to the real world and is prepared for the challenge of society.

## **Visits and Visitors**

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum is important and we aim to run a number of these over the school year. We actively seek parental support on trips, aiming for a ratio of a minimum of 1:5. For safety reasons we say no to younger siblings coming along on school trips. Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a doctor for example. We often ask parents if they are able (and brave enough!) to share knowledge or a skill with the class.

## **Classroom Organisation**

Our Reception classroom has defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. The classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. The classroom has a writing area, maths area, book corner, role-play area and carpeted teaching area. During Play to Learn sessions, there are also areas set up for construction/small world and creative activities.

Children have daily opportunities to access the outdoor environment which also enables them to increase their levels of physical activity. Children's learning is enabled within the outdoor learning environment which is seen as an extension of the classroom within which children are encouraged to use and apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills through outdoor learning opportunities that also engages all pupils in a positive way with their local, natural environment. The children also have more physical play during break time, P.E. and whole school events such as sports day and Intra-School competitions.

To encourage children to take responsibility for their things, each child has their own labelled peg in the cloakroom for their coats and a labelled group box for their bookbags

## **Assessment and Observations**

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

Assessment is a teacher-led judgement based on the practitioner's ongoing knowledge, interaction and observation of the child's learning throughout the year. These observations are added to Tapestry and used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers through the Tapestry app.

On entry to Reception we carry out our own baseline assessments for each child as well as the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Throughout the year the class teacher submits end of seasonal term assessment data to the Head Teacher showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging' or 'expected'. This information is also communicated to parents/carers in the Reception child's end of year report. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

### **Role of Staff and Key Worker**

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's wellbeing now and their future successes. There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

### **Partnership with Parents and Carers**

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. We use the Tapestry online learning journey which allows parents to view all their children's observations, photographs and videos. They can like and comment on observations that we add for their child and it's also possible for parent's to add their own observations. These comments and own observations will allow us to find out about which activities the children really enjoyed and the learning they get up to at home.

Parents are invited to attend class assemblies, sports days, Nativities and Church Services. When a child gains a place at Ethelbert Road Primary, we offer a meeting in June where all parents and carers can meet the headteacher and reception staff before September. During this meeting, parents find out about procedures and routines, and can ask questions. If needed or requested, parents can arrange an appointment to meet with the reception teacher before September. Children will receive a transition morning/afternoon in groups of 15 and then the opportunity for all 30 children and families to meet during a play and stay afternoon.

In September, the children begin with two or three half days (staying for lunch) and then full time. Parents are invited to attend Parents' Evenings during the year and staff are available most mornings and evenings to talk and to discuss more urgent matters.

## **Health & Safety and Safeguarding Children**

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 Guidance. It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads and cameras to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in class portfolios, in class displays, on the school Facebook account and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website, closed Facebook page and Twitter account through the paperwork in their initial starter packs. We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit and milk from a Government scheme. Parents can choose to provide a fruit/vegetable based snack for their child if they wish. During all snack and meal times, children are directly supervised by staff who can both see and hear them at all times. Adults remain alert to potential choking risks and follow school procedures to minimise hazards. Staff are trained in paediatric first aid and allergy awareness, and all dietary requirements and allergies are clearly displayed and communicated. We take all accidents seriously and always log if a child bangs their head or injures themselves in any way. We have cold compresses stored in the school fridge. The school maintains up-to-date records of children's medical needs, allergies, and medication, and all staff are aware of individual care plans where these are required. We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets.

We follow whole school procedures for child protection. Michele Kirkbride, headteacher, is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Lisa Vitiello, Claire Cornall and Sally Rix are the deputy designated safeguarding leads) and all concerns are discussed. We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.

