



Withycombe Raleigh C of E Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Approved by:

Date approved:

Review date:

EYFS Lead: Emma Jones

Safeguarding Lead: Mike Smith

Our Aim

This policy outlines the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Withycombe Raleigh C of E Primary School. Throughout this policy, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to children in our Foundation Stage (Reception) class.

We are committed to providing every child with a safe, joyful, inclusive and ambitious early education that lays the foundations for lifelong learning, wellbeing and belonging. We recognise every child as unique, capable, curious and full of potential. Through warm relationships, enabling environments and meaningful experiences, we nurture children who are confident, resilient, thoughtful, respectful and independent learners.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

We adhere to the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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.
- The importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. We plan the curriculum around the seven areas of learning for the Early Years Foundation Stage:

The Prime Areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The Specific Areas:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

No area of learning stands alone; each is equally important and connected to the others. We deliver our curriculum through a combination of adult-led guidance and child-initiated exploration. Every child is unique, and we aim to meet their individual needs through a broad and balanced range of experiences.

Curriculum Design

Our curriculum is carefully planned to be broad, balanced, ambitious and inclusive, ensuring that all children can access rich, meaningful and engaging learning experiences. Children learn through a carefully considered balance of focused adult-led teaching, guided provision and child-initiated learning woven throughout the day. Through exciting, joyful and hands-on opportunities, we place play, exploration, curiosity and first-hand experiences at the heart of learning.

Sequenced curriculum objectives are aligned to the Early Learning Goals and are designed to build progressively over time. We deliberately revisit and deepen important concepts, themes, stories, skills and knowledge throughout the EYFS so that children can strengthen understanding, make connections and apply learning confidently in different contexts. Our curriculum follows a spiral approach, recognising that repeated experiences and opportunities to rehearse, revisit and refine learning help children develop secure foundations for future learning.

Continuous provision is thoughtfully designed to support independence, communication, creativity, problem-solving and sustained shared thinking, allowing children to independently practise, apply and extend their learning through meaningful play. We value awe and wonder, storytelling, outdoor learning, rich talk and real-life experiences, recognising that children learn best when they are emotionally safe, actively engaged and able to learn through purposeful, experiential contexts.

As children move through the phase, the curriculum is carefully sequenced to prepare them for a successful transition into Year 1 and beyond.

Communication, Language & Literacy

At Withycombe, we place communication and language at the heart of our Early Years curriculum. Opportunities to develop speaking, listening and understanding are embedded throughout the day through meaningful interactions, songs, rhymes, storytelling, play and carefully chosen core texts. We aim to foster a lifelong love of reading alongside teaching the essential skills needed to become confident readers.

From developing phonological awareness and engaging in rich discussions about stories, to daily phonics teaching and the development of independent reading strategies, children are supported to build strong foundations for future learning. As a school, we follow the Little Wandle systematic synthetic phonics programme.

We recognise that communication is not limited to spoken language and may also include gesture, facial expression, body language, movement, play and mark-making. Adults sensitively model and extend language through commentary, recasting, attentive listening, rich vocabulary and open-ended questioning. Children are given time, space and emotional safety to communicate, think and express themselves in different ways.

Early Mathematics

Our mathematics curriculum is supported by the NCETM Mastering Number scheme, which help us provide a carefully sequenced approach to developing deep mathematical understanding. We prioritise number sense, subitising, pattern, comparison, spatial reasoning, problem-solving and rich mathematical talk through meaningful, hands-on experiences. Children explore mathematics through real-world contexts, practical exploration, manipulatives and structured representations, allowing them to build secure conceptual understanding over time. We value reasoning and mathematical thinking above rote procedures, encouraging children to notice patterns, explain their ideas, justify their thinking and make connections within mathematics.

Inclusion

In keeping with our intent of seeing every child as a unique individual with the capacity to thrive and be successful, the EYFS curriculum provides challenge for all children. Partnerships with families and external agencies are central to our graduated approach. We prioritise emotional safety and recognise that children learn best when they feel secure and connected.

At Withycombe, no child shall be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability as detailed in the school Equality Policy. With support from the school SENCO Team, teachers in EYFS will plan for children with special educational needs ensuring that all children have the opportunity to develop to their full potential. If a child with identified SEND enters the Early Years, a meeting will be held and a plan devised to support the child and parents in their transition into school.

We use Devon's Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision (OAIP) and the Early Years Ordinarily Available Targeted Support Framework to ensure all children, including those with SEND, can attend, engage and thrive within our setting. We believe high-quality inclusive teaching is the foundation of effective SEND provision and provide approaches, adaptations and support that are "helpful to all, harmful to none and crucial for some." Support is tailored responsively through adaptive teaching, enabling environments, strong relationships and targeted provision where needed as part of a graduated approach.

Staff

All staff involved in the education of our children will develop good, healthy relationships and provide a secure environment in which children feel able to make mistakes, as well as build confidence and celebrate their successes. The Early Years team use guidance and support strategies from agencies such as the Bladder & Bowel Team, Speech and Language therapists, SEND support staff, health workers and other family support practitioners to provide a multi-agency network which supports the needs of individual children as and when this is necessary. At times, we welcome visiting student teachers and school students who work alongside our staff. Other professionals may work within the setting throughout the year. All visitors and helpers hold an appropriate DBS certificate, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children.

Snack & Lunch Time

Meal and snack times are viewed as important social, developmental and safeguarding opportunities. Snack Time is a time where the children enjoy a drink of milk or water, and piece of fruit or vegetable together. This time of day is the ideal opportunity to develop and enhance the children's social skills and to encourage interaction and conversation with their peers as they sit together. It also develops independence as the children are encouraged to serve themselves.

Children are:

- supervised whilst eating
- supported to eat safely
- encouraged to develop independence appropriately

At least one member of staff with current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) training is present during snack and mealtimes in line with EYFS statutory requirements.

Staff understand:

- choking risks
- allergy management
- food safety procedures
- children's individual medical and dietary needs

Intimate Care and Toileting

Children's dignity, privacy and emotional wellbeing are respected at all times. Intimate care procedures:

- balance privacy with safeguarding considerations
- are carried out sensitively and professionally
- promote independence wherever possible

Children are supported with warmth, respect and reassurance.

Assessment

Assessment is an ongoing part of the Foundation Stage, primarily through formative methods. These observations help inform judgements against the termly checkpoints across all seven areas of learning. The checkpoints are progressive, building on skills and knowledge as children move through the Reception year. Monitoring Meetings with the Senior Leadership Team are held to celebrate achievements, track progress, and identify areas where additional support may be needed. Our checkpoint trackers are used as a key assessment tool, updated and analysed each term, and used to support moderation. During their first half-term in Reception, children also complete the mandatory Reception Baseline Assessment, carried out by class teachers. This information helps identify next steps and informs future planning.

Recording & Reporting

We record a snapshot of each child's individual learning journey through the use of our Look What I Can Do books (which we share at Parents Evening), and our online platform, Tapestry, to support and strengthen our home-school partnership.

At Withycombe, we share children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals with parents at the end of the Reception year. This comes in the form of a detailed end-of-year report written by the class teacher, providing a full picture of each child's knowledge, understanding, and abilities, their attainment against expected standards, and their readiness for Year 1.

Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

We value strong partnerships with our parents and carers, working as a team to support our children.

- Parents and carers are recognised as children's first and most enduring educators.
- Welcome Evening, Nursery Visits and Home Visits allow parents and nursery practitioners to meet EYFS staff and share information about each child.
- Transition Days provide opportunities for children to become familiar with classrooms and outdoor areas.
- An open-door policy ensures that an adult from each class is available at the start and end of each day for brief discussions or alternatively communication is available via the class email system.
- Communication is maintained through Tapestry, termly newsletters and online workshops, including phonics and maths sessions.
- Parents Evenings are held twice a year.
- End-of-year reports provide a detailed summary of each child's progress.

We aim to work alongside families with openness, warmth and respect.

EYFS Profile

In the final term of the Reception year (no later than 30th June), an EYFS Profile is completed for each child. This provides a reliable, valid, and accurate assessment of a child's development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The profile assesses each child's outcomes against the 17 Early Learning Goal (ELG) descriptors. Further details can be found in the *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook*. It also indicates whether a child has achieved a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed by the class teacher using professional knowledge and judgement to make a "best fit" decision. Each area of the EYFS curriculum is graded as:

- 1 = **Emerging** ELG (not yet meeting expected levels)
- 2 = **Expected** ELG (meeting expected levels of development)

A copy of the EYFS Profile report is shared with Year 1 teachers to facilitate dialogue between Reception and Year 1 staff, supporting the planning of learning for the next academic year.

The profile data is statutory and submitted to the Local Authority, where it is used to benchmark performance and identify areas for school improvement.

Safeguarding in the EYFS

Our safeguarding procedures reflect the EYFS 2025 statutory requirements.

Please read the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy for comprehensive information regarding the safeguarding and protection of all children in our care. We know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to creating a culture where children:

- feel safe
- are listened to
- are protected from harm
- know trusted adults will help them

All staff:

- receive safeguarding training
- understand safeguarding procedures
- know how to report concerns
- receive regular updates and ongoing support

We follow safer recruitment procedures including:

- appropriate DBS checks
- references obtained before employment
- suitability checks
- safeguarding interview questions
- staff induction procedures

Safeguarding policies include procedures to help ensure only suitable adults work with children.

Attendance and Prolonged Absence

Children's attendance is monitored carefully.

Where a child is absent for a prolonged or unexplained period:

- families are contacted promptly
- safeguarding procedures are followed where necessary
- additional emergency contacts may be used

We recognise attendance as an important safeguarding responsibility.

Staffing and Training

We are committed to high-quality professional development. Staff receive ongoing training in:

- safeguarding
- paediatric first aid
- child development
- communication and language
- phonics
- SEND and inclusion
- behaviour and self-regulation
- curriculum development

Students and trainees are only included in ratios in line with EYFS statutory requirements.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

Monitoring includes:

- learning walks
- provision reviews
- safeguarding audits
- assessment moderation
- pupil progress discussions
- staff reflection and supervision

The effectiveness of the EYFS provision is continually evaluated to ensure the highest possible outcomes for children.

This EYFS Policy has been updated in 2026 to reflect current best practice and new national guidance, including The Strong Foundations in the Early Years and The Best Start in Life: A Research Review for Early Years. These documents emphasise the importance of early learning, emotional wellbeing, and the role of strong adult-child relationships in supporting children's holistic development. Where relevant, sections of this policy draw directly on principles and recommendations from these publications.