



Nunnery Wood Primary School

Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

Policy adopted from	
Date of Review	19 th March 2026
Date of Next Review	19 th March 2027
Reviewed by	Local Governing Body
Signature of Chair	<i>R Harding</i>

Early Years Foundation Stage

Policy

Introduction:

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.” EYFS Statutory Framework, September 2025.

The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Nunnery Wood Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term ‘setting’ refers to the Early Years educational provision in Oak and Willow classes at Nunnery Wood Primary School. This is available to children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. These children are in the final year of the EYFS.

In the policy the term ‘practitioner’ refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS at Nunnery Wood Primary School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential. We aim to support each child’s welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children’s self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the school community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children’s independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children’s understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions that differ from their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children’s learning and development.

- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children’s personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children’s existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities that reflect all seven areas of learning in a range of environments, both inside and outside.

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage framework:

Teaching in the EYFS setting at Nunnery Wood Primary School is delivered in accordance with the government’s statutory document “EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers. (September 2025)”. This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children’s welfare, learning and development requirements through four guiding principles which should shape practice in 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.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The EYFS seeks to provide: • Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind. • A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.

• Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers. • Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is centred on three prime areas of learning:

- 1. Communication and language**
- 2. Physical development**
- 3. Personal, social and emotional development**

“Three prime areas are particularly important for learning and forming relationships. They build a foundation for children to thrive and provide the basis for learning in all areas.” EYFS framework p8

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, which help strengthen and develop the three prime areas, and ignite children’s curiosity and enthusiasm. These are:

- 1. Literacy**
- 2. Mathematics**
- 3. Understanding of the world**
- 4. Expressive arts and design**

All seven of these areas of learning and development address children’s physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all areas

of learning and development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make many links between what they are learning. All areas of learning and development are given equal weighting and value.

In addition to these seven areas of learning the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum should also promote and foster the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**:

- 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.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin learning and development across all areas and support children to become effective and motivated learners.

4. Active Learning through Play

At Nunnery Wood Primary School we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play. We recognise that play is an essential and rich part of the learning process for young children, supporting them in all areas of development. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by practitioners.

In the EYFS at Nunnery Wood Primary School practitioners aim to ensure there is a rich learning environment which provides both structured and unstructured learning opportunities both inside and outside, providing children with the opportunities and conditions in which to flourish in all aspects of their development. Learning activities and provision, linked to each area of learning, within the environment are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

The day is organised to provide a balance between the following:

•**Child Initiated Activities**: these are play-based learning experiences where children choose and direct their own activities, fostering independence, creativity, and deeper learning, with adults playing a supportive role by setting up environments and extending ideas rather than leading the play

•**Adult Initiated Activities**: these are planned learning experiences where an adult chooses, organises, and guides children through a structured task to achieve specific learning goals,

•**Adult Led Activities** structured, planned sessions where an adult actively directs, guides, and teaches children to achieve specific learning goals,

5. Planning

The EYFS framework and Early Years Outcomes documents provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all areas of learning and Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. All planning references the specific areas of learning being covered and the age related outcomes or Early Learning Goals matched to individual and group learning needs.

Medium term planning is developed around a theme usually lasting between two and six weeks, and using high quality texts as stimulus for learning. Each new theme planned takes into account individual children's learning and developmental needs, children's interests and enthusiasms and opportunities to reflect significant events in the cultures and lives of the children within the setting. All early years practitioners at Nunnery Wood Primary School contribute to the planning process.

Short term planning is developed within each theme to plan for learning activities to promote and target specific learning outcomes that are matched to children's needs based on ongoing assessment for learning. Planning for all areas of the learning environment, both inside and outside, is also reviewed and adapted each week to reflect children's interests, next steps in learning, and links to the theme. Planning documents take the form of a weekly timetable, with details of all adult led focused learning activities, and weekly phonics plans alongside a detailed plan for continuous provision. This links to each area of the Early Years environment detailing how the area have been enhanced to promote and provide opportunities for children to embed key skills, knowledge, and understanding.

All Areas of learning and development are planned for and available to access for all children within the setting at all times.

Opportunities for educational visits within the local community and further afield, as well a wide range of visitors to the setting, are also planned to support children's learning and development.

6. Assessment and Tracking Progress:

At the beginning of the academic year every child undergoes the Reception Baseline Assessment. This is a short, interactive, and statutory 1-to-1 check for children within their first six weeks of starting Reception. It assesses early literacy, language, communication, and mathematics using practical, age-appropriate materials to establish a starting point for measuring school progress by the end of Year 6.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts.

Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners regularly take time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified, and then relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, talking with children about their activity or play, annotation of children's written work (in line with the school's marking policy), and completion of objective led planning & evaluation forms. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using Early Years Outcomes age related development bands and Development Matters documents throughout a child's time in the EYFS at Nunnery Wood Primary School. In line with the whole school we use the Insight tracking system to track and monitor each child's progress and attainment across all seventeen Areas of Learning. This is updated at regular intervals during the year to monitor and track children's progress:

- Baseline assessment against the Early Years Outcomes age related bands for all 17 Areas of Learning are completed by the end of Week 3 of the Autumn term each year to provide a detailed picture of the starting point for each child.
- Termly updates of each child's attainment and progress through the Early Years Outcomes/Development Matters age related bands are undertaken in December, March and June.

- Attainment against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in all 17 Areas of Learning is completed in June each year to create each child's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Judgements made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development. This attainment is reported to parents in July each year and an opportunity to discuss this report is offered at summer term parents and carers' appointments.

Year 1 teachers are involved in moderating end of EYFSP / ELG judgements with EYFS practitioners with each child's EYFSP attainment shared with Year 1 staff as part of the transition process into Year 1 during June and July of each year.

Children's receptive language skills are also assessed on entry to school using the LanguageLink assessment tools. This assessment provides early identification of individual receptive language needs and difficulties. Targeted support is then provided for identified children both as part of quality first teaching and in planned intervention groups. Children identified with low receptive language skills in either assessment have their progress tracked and are re-assessed.

7. Parents as Partners

At Nunnery Wood Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents and carers, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development and we value parents and carers roles as their child's primary educators.

At Nunnery Wood Primary School we ensure that parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular written communication, home and school reading record books and informal conversations at the beginning and end of the day as part of the setting's 'Open Door' policy. We also provide workshops for parents and carers at regular times throughout the year to enable them to best support their child's learning at home.

Parents and carers are invited to meet with teachers at regular intervals during the course of the academic year. Parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs are invited to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress every term.

8. Admissions and Induction

Nunnery Wood Primary School provides full-time Early Years education for children in their Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Before they start in the setting, all children are offered two visits to school during the summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children and their parents or carers to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. Practitioners will also go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings or have a conversation with pre-school providers about all children prior to them starting school. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners in developing their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Nunnery Wood Primary School as smooth as possible. Currently children with no pre-school experience are offered home visits as part of their induction process.

In the summer term parents and carers are invited into school to a 'Starting School' meeting. Information packs are distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations and the induction process for starting school in September. There is also time for parents and carers to ask questions.

In September all children attend school part-time for the first two weeks of term, either for a morning session or an afternoon session. This allows for children to start school in a group of no more than 15 children, allowing time to get used to the setting and routines in a smaller group.

From week three of the Autumn term three attendance options are offered to parents:

Full-time (8.40am – 3.10pm each day), or

Part time – mornings only on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and full days on Tuesday and Thursday, or

Part-time – mornings only (8.40am. – 11.50am daily)

Attendance options are discussed with parents and carers prior to week three of the Autumn term and for children attending part-time their attendance option and progress is discussed informally with parents on a weekly basis, with a view to building up to full time attendance as soon as possible, balancing the parent's or carer's wishes with the child's individual needs and development. Attendance at school is only ever reduced in the most exceptional circumstances and with full involvement of the head teacher and other relevant members of the school leadership team.

9. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of all the EYFS practitioners at Nunnery Wood Primary School to follow the principles stated in this policy. Regular monitoring is undertaken by members of SLT using a wide range of activities including learning walks, moderation, and pupil progress meetings as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Policy written by Polly Anderson January 2026
KS1 and EYFS Assistant Headteacher and SENCO