Early Years Foundation Stage Procedure

September 2026

Intent

At Walton-on-Trent C of E Primary School, our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum is designed to provide a rich, ambitious and inclusive start to every child's educational journey. In alignment with our school vision, *Living, Learning, Laughing in God's Love*, we nurture confident, curious and resilient learners who feel valued, safe and ready to thrive.

Our curriculum is built around the progressive development of knowledge, skills and vocabulary through meaningful, engaging themes that align with Key Stage 1 topics, ensuring continuity and curriculum cohesion across our mixed-age classes. Through carefully planned learning experiences, children develop an understanding of themselves, their community and the wider world, whilst fostering a lifelong love of learning.

We recognise that children arrive with different experiences, strengths and starting points. Therefore, our curriculum is carefully sequenced to build on prior learning and provide opportunities for all children, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, to achieve success. High-quality texts, purposeful play, first-hand experiences and sustained interactions support children's communication and language development, personal, social and emotional wellbeing, physical development and academic achievement.

Underpinned by our school values of honesty, kindness, respect, ambition, courage and perseverance, we aim to empower children to become independent thinkers, problem-solvers and effective communicators. By fostering the Characteristics of Effective Learning, we equip children with the attitudes and behaviours needed to become successful learners both now and in the future.

We strive to make a meaningful and lasting impact on every child's life, ensuring they leave Reception with secure foundations in all seven areas of learning and are fully prepared for the transition into Year One.

Our children thrive!

Implementation

The EYFS curriculum at Walton-on-Trent C of E Primary School is organised into six carefully planned half-termly themes that provide meaningful opportunities for children to explore, investigate and make connections in their learning. Themes are enhanced through high-quality texts, enrichment opportunities, visits, visitors and real-life experiences which develop children's knowledge, vocabulary and cultural capital.

Learning is delivered through a balance of adult-led teaching, carefully planned continuous provision and child-initiated play. We recognise that young children learn best through active engagement and purposeful experiences. Continuous provision is designed to encourage independence, curiosity, creativity and problem-solving, enabling children to revisit, practice and apply taught skills across all areas of learning.

Children engage in the seven areas of learning through whole-class teaching, small-group work, targeted interventions and high-quality interactions. Daily phonics sessions, mathematics

teaching, storytelling, singing and language-rich experiences provide strong foundations for future learning. As children move through Reception, opportunities for sustained focus and adult-directed learning gradually increase to support a successful transition into Key Stage One.

As a small school with mixed-age classes, we operate a carefully planned rolling programme that ensures full curriculum coverage, progression of knowledge and skills and avoids unnecessary repetition. Our curriculum is informed by the Development Matters guidance and is adapted to meet the needs, interests and starting points of our children.

Inclusive practice is central to our provision. Staff have high expectations for all learners and utilise visual supports, explicit instruction, scaffolding, flexible grouping, metacognitive questioning and appropriate technology in line with the EEF Five-a-Day principles. These approaches help to remove barriers to learning and ensure all children, including those with SEND, can access, participate in and succeed within the curriculum.

Assessment is ongoing through observations, interactions and professional dialogue. Practitioners use assessment information to identify next steps, adapt provision and ensure learning builds progressively over time. Strong partnerships with parents and carers further support children's development and celebrate learning both inside and outside of school.

Impact

Children make strong progress from their individual starting points and develop the knowledge, skills and vocabulary required for future learning. Through a carefully sequenced curriculum and high-quality provision, they become confident, independent and enthusiastic learners who demonstrate the Characteristics of Effective Learning in all aspects of school life.

Children develop secure foundations in communication and language, early reading, writing and mathematics, alongside a growing understanding of the world around them. They are able to apply their learning across different contexts, show resilience when faced with challenges and demonstrate increasing independence in their thinking and decision-making.

The inclusive nature of our curriculum ensures that all children, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, are supported to participate fully, achieve their potential and develop positive attitudes towards learning. Children build strong relationships, communicate effectively, collaborate with others and demonstrate the school values in their daily interactions.

As a result, children leave Reception as happy, confident and capable learners who are emotionally secure, socially aware and academically prepared for the demands of Year One. They are equipped not only with the knowledge and skills they need for future success, but also with the curiosity, perseverance and love of learning that will support them throughout their lives.

Our children thrive, flourish and grow as unique individuals, living, learning and laughing in God's love.

How This Looks in Practice at Walton-on-Trent

Characteristic of Effective Learning	Examples Across Our Long-Term Plan
Playing and Exploring	Investigation stations, small world play, outdoor exploration, sensory activities, role-play linked to curriculum themes.
Active Learning	Daily phonics practice, independent challenges, revisiting key knowledge, celebrating achievements and perseverance.
Creating and Thinking Critically	Construction projects, problem-solving tasks, Drawing Club activities, enquiry-based learning, designing and making.

Teaching

Teaching in the EYFS is delivered through a carefully balanced approach that integrates direct instruction with child-initiated learning. This dual strategy ensures that children receive structured support while also having the freedom to explore and develop independently.

Direct, adult-led teaching is planned intentionally to introduce specific skills, concepts, and knowledge. These sessions include whole-class and small-group activities that promote key learning behaviours such as listening, turn-taking, collaboration, and perseverance.

Daily routines follow a consistent timetable, providing children with a secure structure that supports emotional wellbeing and learning habits. These routines include focused teaching in phonics, literacy, mathematics, and other curriculum areas, aligned with the EYFS framework.

The EYFS learning environment is designed to support all seven areas of learning—three prime and four specific. Classrooms are organised to provide rich opportunities for exploration, creativity, and skill development. Resources are accessible and varied, enabling children to engage in meaningful play and learning experiences.

The outdoor learning environment is an integral extension of the classroom. Children are encouraged to learn outside throughout the day, with activities that reflect the full breadth of the EYFS curriculum. Our dedicated woodland area supports regular Forest School sessions, which promote resilience, risk-taking, teamwork, and a connection with nature.

Planning

Planning within the EYFS is dynamic, responsive, and child-centred. It is designed to ensure that all children receive a broad, balanced, and developmentally appropriate curriculum that reflects their individual needs, interests, and stages of development.

Practitioners continuously adapt planning and provision to respond to children's evolving

interests and learning needs.

Long-term planning outlines the overarching themes and curricular goals for the academic year. These themes are flexible and informed by the interests of the children, the school's core values, and statutory curriculum requirements.

Medium-term planning provides a structured overview of learning across each half term. It ensures equal emphasis across all seven areas of learning, with a particular focus on the three Prime Areas—Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Physical Development—especially at the beginning of the academic year.

Short-term planning is highly flexible and responsive to the immediate needs and interests of the children. It incorporates both adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities. Practitioners may choose to maintain specific areas of provision to allow children time to consolidate and master skills, or introduce new resources to extend learning when developmental milestones are reached.

Assessment

Assessment enables practitioners to understand each child's developmental progress, interests, and learning styles, and to tailor educational experiences accordingly.

Practitioners use ongoing observational assessment to monitor children's development across all seven areas of learning. These observations inform short-term planning and help identify next steps in learning. Evidence is gathered through a variety of methods, including annotated work samples, floor books, photographs, and contributions from parents via Tapestry and Class Dojo.
Baseline assessment is conducted upon entry to Nursery or Reception. In Reception, children complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first six weeks of the autumn term. The RBA provides a baseline measure for school-level progress tracking from Reception to the end of Key Stage 2.

Throughout the academic year, class teachers assess whether children are 'on track' or 'not on track' to meet end-of-year expectations. These assessments are reviewed termly and submitted to the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher.

At the end of the Reception year, practitioners complete the EYFS Profile for each child, assessing progress against the 17 Early Learning Goals. Outcomes are shared with parents and inform transition planning into Year One.

Impact

Our EYFS curriculum is designed to ensure that children make sustained progress across all seven areas of learning, develop the characteristics of effective learning, and are well-prepared for the transition into Key Stage 1.

Children's progress is monitored through a combination of formative and summative assessment strategies. Termly tracking identifies whether children are 'on track' or 'not on track' to meet the Early Learning Goals (ELGs), enabling timely interventions and support.

At the end of the Reception year, the EYFS Profile provides a comprehensive overview of each child's attainment. Children who achieve the ELGs in the Prime Areas, Literacy, and Mathematics are considered to have achieved a Good Level of Development.

Our EYFS provision ensures that children leave the Foundation Stage with a strong foundation in learning behaviours, emotional resilience, and academic readiness.

SEND

We are committed to providing an inclusive EYFS environment that meets the needs of all learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

Children with SEND are identified through ongoing observation, assessment, and collaboration between EYFS staff and the school's SENCO. Appropriate strategies, resources, and support plans are implemented to meet individual needs.

We maintain strong partnerships with external agencies to ensure children receive high-quality, specialist support.

Our EYFS provision is flexible and responsive, allowing for personalised learning experiences that accommodate a wide range of abilities and developmental stages.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a fundamental priority within our EYFS provision. We adhere to the statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2023).

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) oversee all safeguarding concerns, which are recorded securely using the school's online platform.

Staff are prohibited from using personal mobile devices in the EYFS environment. Photographs are taken using school-approved devices and used only with parental consent.

Daily health and safety checks are conducted, and fire drills are held regularly. Children receive free fruit and milk, and healthy habits are promoted throughout the curriculum.

Health and Wellbeing

We recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe, and emotionally secure.

As a healthy school, we promote healthy eating and lifestyle choices. Children receive free fruit and milk and may purchase toast during morning break, the children are supervised when eating at all times and staff will be pediatric first aid trained.

We maintain rigorous health and safety standards. Accidents are recorded and communicated to parents.

We support children's emotional wellbeing through secure relationships, consistent routines, and a nurturing environment.

Legislation and Curriculum Overview

Our EYFS provision is aligned with the statutory requirements set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2023).

The curriculum is shaped by four guiding principles: A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, and Learning and Development.

The seven areas of learning include three Prime Areas (Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development) and four Specific Areas (Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design).

Our curriculum is informed by Development Matters and Birth to Five Matters, with enrichment opportunities such as Forest School, educational visits, and memorable moment days.

EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers
Development Matters - GOV.UK
Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage
Bto5M-PT-LINKS-Aug-Portrait-Landscape.pdf
The national curriculum in England - Framework document
Help for early years providers : Screen use

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin all aspects of EYFS provision:

1. Playing and Exploring – Investigating, engaging in imaginative play, and being willing to try new activities.
2. Active Learning – Sustaining concentration, persevering through challenges, and enjoying achievement.
3. Creating and Thinking Critically – Developing ideas, making connections, and solving problems.

These characteristics are nurtured through daily practice and form the foundation for lifelong learning.

Parents as Partners

We value and promote strong partnerships with parents and carers.

We engage families through home visits, induction meetings, stay and play sessions, and regular communication via Tapestry and Class Dojo.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey and attend celebration events throughout the year.

We believe that collaborative relationships with families enhance children's learning, wellbeing, and development.

Baseline Assessment

Baseline assessment establishes a clear understanding of each child's starting point.

Initial observations and parent input inform planning and provision.

In Reception, children complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first six weeks. The RBA provides a baseline for school-level progress tracking.

Practitioners use baseline data to personalise learning and identify support needs.

Screen Use

In line with the Government's 2026 Early Years Screen Time Guidance, Walton-on-Trent C E Primary School recognises the importance of minimising children's exposure to screens within early years. Screen use will be carefully considered, purposeful and used only where it supports

specific learning and development outcomes. We prioritise play-based, hands-on experiences, social interaction, physical activity and meaningful communication with adults and peers, as these are fundamental to children's development. Any digital technology used will involve high-quality, age-appropriate content and, where possible, adult interaction and discussion. Any digital content used within the setting will be carefully selected and reviewed by staff to ensure it is appropriate for the age, stage and developmental needs of the children. Content will be calm, engaging and purposeful, supporting children's learning without being overstimulating. Preference will be given to content that is slow-paced, predictable and easy for young children to follow, avoiding programmes or videos with excessive scene changes, flashing images, loud or complex audio, or rapidly changing visuals. All screen-based experiences will be adult-led, intentional and used to enhance, rather than replace, active play, real-life experiences and meaningful interactions with others.

Monitoring and Review

We maintain high standards through regular monitoring, evaluation, and review.

EYFS provision is monitored by the Headteacher and subject leaders through observations, work sampling, and staff discussions.

A named governor oversees EYFS and reports to the governing body.

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure alignment with statutory guidance and best practice.