



## **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy**

**Last review: March 2026**

**Next review: March 2028**

### **1. Aims**

At East-the-Water Primary School, we aim to provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment where children feel secure, valued and motivated to learn. We recognise that the early years are a crucial stage in children's development and lay the foundations for future learning, wellbeing and success.

This policy aims to ensure:

- Children access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum which supports strong progress from their starting points
- High quality teaching and learning experiences which enable all children to thrive
- A strong focus on the prime areas of learning to build secure foundations for later learning
- Positive relationships between children, staff and families
- Equality of opportunity and inclusive practice for all children

We believe that children learn best when they feel safe, are engaged in meaningful play and experiences, and are supported by skilled adults who understand their development.

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### **2. Legislation**

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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### **3. Structure of the EYFS at East-the-Water Primary School**

The Early Years Foundation Stage includes:

- Nursery: ages 2–4 years
- Reception: ages 4–5 years

The nursery offers both 15-hour and 30-hour funded provision.

The school day runs from 8:40am to 3:20pm.

Children in both Nursery and Reception have access to well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environments. There are two dedicated outdoor areas, one for Nursery and one for Reception, and children also have opportunities to use the wider school grounds and playground.

Children also have access to wraparound care provision, including morning and after school sessions, which are provided on the school site by school staff. Some nursery children access this provision as part of their funded hours. We ensure there is good communication between staff so that children's individual needs are understood and supported throughout the day. Children attending wraparound provision are supported by familiar staff where possible, helping to promote continuity, security and positive relationships.

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#### **4. Curriculum Intent**

Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of our children and community. We prioritise:

- Communication and language development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development
- Independence and self-care
- Positive relationships and behaviour
- School readiness

Our curriculum has been designed to reflect the needs of our children and community while remaining flexible to respond to the strengths and needs of each cohort. We recognise that children join the Early Years with a wide range of experiences, knowledge and levels of development. We therefore prioritise the prime areas of learning — communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development — as these provide the essential foundations for all future learning.

High-quality interactions, secure relationships and opportunities for exploration and play enable children to develop confidence, independence and resilience. Our curriculum builds progressively from Nursery into Reception, ensuring children develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for successful transition into Year 1 and beyond.

We recognise that children arrive with different experiences and starting points. Our curriculum builds progressively from Nursery through to Reception, ensuring children develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need for Year 1.

In Nursery, there is a strong emphasis on the prime areas of learning, helping children develop secure foundations in communication, relationships and physical development.

In Reception, children continue to strengthen the prime areas while increasingly applying their learning within the specific areas, including early reading, writing and mathematics.

We follow a systematic phonics programme (Read Write Inc.) and use a mastery approach to mathematics through Number Sense and Ark Maths, ensuring children develop secure understanding of number and early mathematical concepts.

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#### **Progression Across the Early Years**

Learning is carefully sequenced across Nursery and Reception to ensure progression over time.

In Nursery, there is a strong focus on the prime areas of learning, with priority given to developing communication, emotional security, independence and physical development through play, routines and high-quality adult interaction.

As children move into Reception, they continue to strengthen these foundations while increasingly applying their skills within the specific areas of learning, including early reading, writing and mathematics. There is a gradual increase in focused teaching alongside a continued emphasis on play-based learning.

This progression ensures children develop both the confidence and competence needed for the expectations of Key Stage 1.

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## **5. Implementation – Teaching and Learning**

We believe children learn best through a balance of:

- Child-initiated play
- Adult-guided experiences
- Carefully planned adult teaching

Adults play a crucial role in supporting children's learning through warm, responsive relationships and skilful interactions. Practitioners observe children closely to understand their interests, development and next steps, and respond through modelling, questioning, extending vocabulary and sustained shared thinking.

Teaching is both intentional and responsive. Adults provide direct teaching where appropriate while also recognising and maximising spontaneous learning opportunities within play and daily routines.

High-quality interactions are central to our approach. Adults support children to develop language, thinking, problem-solving and independence through encouragement, modelling and carefully timed intervention.

As children move into Reception, there is a gradual increase in structured teaching, particularly in early reading, writing and mathematics, while maintaining the importance of play, exploration and active learning.

Practitioners adapt experiences based on what they know about each child to ensure all children are supported to make progress.

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## **6. Learning Environment**

We provide enabling environments that support exploration, independence and curiosity.

Our provision includes:

- Continuous access to indoor and outdoor learning
- Clearly organised resources which children can access independently
- Opportunities for physical activity and movement

- Spaces for imaginative play and social interaction
- Opportunities for creativity and investigation

The environment is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets children's developmental needs and interests.

The learning environment is designed to promote independence, communication and engagement. Resources are organised so children can access them independently, make choices and develop responsibility for their learning. Both indoor and outdoor environments are valued equally and provide opportunities for exploration, physical activity, imaginative play and investigation.

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## **7. The Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We support children to develop the characteristics of effective learning by encouraging them to:

- Play and explore
- Be active learners
- Think creatively and critically

Adults support children to persevere, solve problems and develop confidence in their abilities.

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## **8. Behaviour, Wellbeing and Self-Regulation**

We recognise that children's emotional wellbeing and ability to regulate their behaviour are fundamental to successful learning. We provide a nurturing environment where children feel safe, secure and valued.

Adults support children to understand emotions, develop self-control and build positive relationships through consistent routines, clear expectations and sensitive adult guidance. Staff use co-regulation strategies, modelling and language to help children manage feelings and behaviour.

We promote independence, resilience and perseverance, supporting children to develop confidence in their abilities and a positive attitude towards challenges.

Positive relationships between adults and children underpin our approach to behaviour, ensuring children feel respected, understood and supported.

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## **9. Assessment**

Assessment is an ongoing part of the learning process and is used to understand children's development and inform teaching.

Practitioners:

- Observe children during play and daily routines
- Use professional knowledge of child development
- Identify next steps and adapt provision accordingly

We use our own progression documents to support assessment and planning.

Parents are kept informed about their child's development through conversations, meetings and updates. In Nursery, Class Dojo is used to share information and learning with families.

Statutory assessments include:

- Progress check at age 2 (where appropriate)
  - Reception Baseline Assessment (within first 6 weeks of Reception)
  - EYFS Profile at the end of Reception
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## **10. Inclusion and SEND**

We are committed to inclusive practice and ensuring all children have access to high quality learning opportunities.

We:

- Identify needs early
- Work closely with families
- Adapt provision and teaching
- Liaise with external professionals where needed

The SENCo works alongside staff to ensure appropriate support is in place.

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## **11. Working with Parents and Carers**

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first educators and value strong partnerships with families.

We support communication through:

- Daily conversations
- Meetings and consultations
- Class Dojo (Nursery)
- Reports and updates
- Workshops and events where appropriate

Each child is assigned a key person who builds relationships with the child and family and supports their development.

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## **12. Safeguarding and Welfare**

Children's safety and wellbeing are our highest priority.

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements outlined in the EYFS statutory framework and the school safeguarding policy.

We ensure:

- Appropriate staffing ratios
- Paediatric first aid trained staff
- Safe premises and equipment
- Clear procedures for accidents and illness
- Promotion of health, including oral health
- Safe eating practices

All staff receive safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities.

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### **13. Staffing and Ratios**

We follow statutory requirements for staffing ratios across Nursery and Reception.

Staff are suitably qualified and supported through ongoing professional development to ensure high quality practice.

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### **14. Transition**

We support smooth transitions:

- Into Nursery
- From Nursery to Reception
- From Reception to Year 1

Information is shared between staff and with families to ensure continuity of learning and care.

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### **15. Monitoring and Review**

The EYFS Lead and senior leaders monitor provision, teaching and outcomes to ensure quality and consistency across the Early Years.

This policy will be reviewed regularly.