Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Last reviewed: 14 October 2026

Reviewed by Governors: Autumn 2026

Next review: Autumn 2027

Purpose

This policy sets out how East-the-Water Primary School provides high-quality early education in Nursery and Reception. It should be read alongside the current Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and relevant whole-school policies.

Our approach

We want every child to have a strong start. Our early years provision combines secure relationships, rich language, an ambitious curriculum and high expectations with the time and space children need to explore, practise and become increasingly independent.

Children learn through a deliberate balance of purposeful play, continuous provision, adult-guided learning and direct teaching. Adults use professional judgement to know when to observe, join, model, question, explain, scaffold and step back. Support is reduced as children become more confident and capable. Clear, consistent routines and expectations help children know what to do and become increasingly independent.

In Nursery, particular attention is given to the prime areas of learning and to developing communication, independence and strong foundations for later learning. In Reception, the balance develops as children are ready for more direct and systematic teaching, while purposeful play and continuous provision remain important ways for children to apply and deepen what they know.

Curriculum and teaching

Our curriculum covers the seven areas of learning and the educational programmes set out in the EYFS. We identify the important knowledge, vocabulary, skills and experiences children need and build these carefully over time so that learning in early years prepares children well for Year 1 and beyond. What we know about children's starting points helps us decide where additional emphasis is needed without narrowing the curriculum or lowering expectations.

- Indoor and outdoor provision is planned with clear learning purposes. Resources and enhancements are chosen because they help children learn, revisit or apply something important.
- Adults promote high-quality talk and interaction throughout the day. They extend language, model vocabulary and thinking, and give children time to respond and develop their ideas. Stories, rhymes, songs and carefully chosen books are used deliberately to build language and knowledge.
- Direct teaching is used where it is the most effective way to secure important knowledge and skills, including phonics, early reading and mathematics.
- The characteristics of effective teaching and learning - playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically - inform how adults plan, interact and respond.

Inclusion

Our curriculum is ambitious for all children, including disadvantaged children, children with SEND and children who speak English as an additional language. We identify barriers and emerging needs early, work closely with families and adapt teaching, the environment, resources and adult support so that children can participate successfully without lowering expectations.

Where additional support is needed, adults use carefully judged scaffolding to help the child succeed and move towards greater independence. We work with the SENCO and other professionals where specialist advice or

support is required. Children who use another language at home are supported to develop English while their home language and cultural identity are valued.

Assessment

Assessment is used to understand what children know and can do, identify where support is needed and decide what should be taught next. It is mainly based on adults knowing children well through everyday interaction, observation and their work.

Assessment should be useful and proportionate. We do not expect unnecessary written observations or evidence that takes adults away from children. Statutory assessments, including the Reception Baseline Assessment and the EYFS Profile, are completed and shared as required by the EYFS framework.

Working with parents and carers

Parents and carers are important partners in children's learning and development. Each child is assigned a key person. Staff build positive relationships with families, share information about children's learning and wellbeing, and encourage parents and carers to contribute what they know about their child. Concerns about development are discussed sensitively and promptly. We work with families, previous settings and Year 1 staff so that transitions are well planned and important information about children's learning, needs and successful support follows the child.

Safeguarding and welfare

The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS apply throughout our provision. They are met through day-to-day practice and the school's established policies and procedures, particularly Safeguarding and Child Protection, Health and Safety, First Aid, Medical Needs, Behaviour and SEND. EYFS staff must know and follow the requirements relevant to their role.

Children are appropriately supervised and staffing arrangements meet statutory requirements. We promote children's physical and emotional wellbeing, including healthy and safe eating, oral health, safe use of the environment and positive behaviour. Any safeguarding concern is acted on in line with the school safeguarding policy and local procedures.

Leadership and monitoring

The EYFS leader is responsible for the quality and consistency of early years provision, working with the headteacher and wider leadership team. Practice is reviewed through normal school improvement processes, including professional dialogue, learning walks, curriculum review and assessment information.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if statutory requirements or school practice change.

Approval

Approved by: Headteacher
Date: 14 October 2026
Shared with: Governing Board