

Early Years Policy 2026

Adopted by the Local Governing Body of
New Road Primary and Nursery School

On 20th January 2026

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1.Aims

Our high expectations will enable children to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will ensure that all our children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start in Key Stage One.

“Children develop quickly in the early years, and early years practitioners aim to do all they can to help children have the best possible start in life. Children have a right, spelled out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender.” The British Association for Early Childhood Education

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At New Road Primary and Nursery School, children are able to join Nursery at the age of 2 and start Reception in the year they turn 5. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 2 to 5. At the school we have a 52 place Nursery. The morning sessions run from 9am-12 noon and the afternoon sessions from 12 noon-3:00pm.

We have 2 reception class with capacity 30 children. To ensure best practice we have two adults, one teacher and one teaching assistant attached to the class.

2. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined Development Matters 2021. The curriculum supports every child to progress in 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The **prime areas** are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 **specific areas**:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

3.Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. We follow a blended approach in our curriculum. This involves creating a curriculum that is knowledge based, focusing on what we want our children to know and do. Staff produce a weekly planning sheet that clearly identifies the knowledge to be learned across the week, key vocabulary that the children should know and how we are to embed all of this in our environment.

When planning:

- Phonics is taught daily using the initiative Read Write Inc. which begins in the summer term in Nursery, is taught across Reception and continues in Key Stage One.
- We introduce maths concepts through play experiences and through some short, adult led sessions.
- Staff take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.
- Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.
- Our progression document shows the clear progression of learning between children in nursery and reception as well as the links to learning that will prepare them for the year 1 curriculum. This document is used to underpin all of the planning in early years.

4.Teaching, Assessment and Reporting

4.1 Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Our approach to teaching in the EYFS is rooted in high-quality interactions, purposeful routines, and carefully planned experiences that enable every child to thrive. We believe that teaching is most effective when it is responsive, engaging, and tailored to individual needs.

Language and Communication

- Daily routines and interactions are designed to develop children's language and vocabulary across all areas of learning, supporting them to communicate effectively and manage their thoughts and feelings.
- Staff engage children in rich, high-quality conversations, scaffolding and modelling language to help them articulate what they know and understand.
- Songs and rhymes are used to build emotional connections to language and develop control and confidence in speaking.

Reading and Stories

- Teachers prioritise daily story time, reading aloud and re-reading high-quality texts. They talk with children about stories to deepen understanding and build familiarity, fostering a lifelong love of reading.

Mathematics

- Staff help children describe patterns, quantities, and shapes in the world around them, making mathematics enjoyable and meaningful.
- Mathematical concepts are introduced in a carefully sequenced way, allowing children to practise and apply their knowledge across all areas of learning.

Responsive and Intentional Teaching

- Staff make informed choices about what, when, and how to teach, based on children's age, context, and starting points. Activities are selected to sustain attention and focus on intended learning outcomes.
- Teachers ensure children have the foundational knowledge needed to succeed, providing additional teaching and practice for those who require extra support.

Practice and Progress

- Information is presented clearly, understanding is checked, and gaps in knowledge are addressed promptly. Children have frequent opportunities to practise and consolidate learning.
- In Reception, staff provide sufficient teaching and practice to develop a comfortable pencil grip and increasing fluency in reading, spelling, handwriting, and number facts.

Professional Focus

- Staff prioritise meaningful interactions with children over time spent observing and recording evidence, ensuring that teaching remains at the heart of practice.

4.2 Assessment

In Early Years, feedback is a vital part of the assessment process and is guided by our EYFS Marking and Feedback Policy. Feedback is primarily verbal and given in the moment to ensure immediate impact on learning. Where written feedback is used, it is age-appropriate and focuses on celebrating success and addressing misconceptions. Teachers distinguish between mistakes (slips) and errors (knowledge gaps) and support children in correcting these through modelling and guided practice. Our approach ensures that feedback is purposeful, consistent, and helps children to make progress by reducing errors over time. All marking and feedback strategies are monitored through the EYFS Marking and Feedback Framework to maintain fidelity and effectiveness.

- Children in nursery and reception have a baseline assessment to assess their starting points. This is then used to inform planning.
- Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff use a range of adult-initiated tasks, progress tasks and observations to shape future planning and ensure all children make progress.
- **In Reception, at** the end of each half term, children are assessed against the 7 areas of learning to ascertain if they are 'on track' or 'not on track'. Children who are deemed not to be 'on track' are then targeted through intervention and small group work to support their learning and help them to make progress.

4.3 Reporting

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 7 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/ or carers.

4.4 Enabling Environments

- We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged.
- The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.
- Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and follows children's interest.
- Effective planning is informed by our progression document to ensure that our children know more, remember more and do more.
- Parents/ carers are encouraged to share what the children's interests are to help the teachers get to know the children.
- Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.
- At the end of **Reception** children will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals.

5 Transition into Year One

Transition from Reception to Year One presents a unique challenge as children move from the play-based approach of the Early Years Foundation Stage to the demands of Key Stage One.

- Leaders and Teachers from both EYFS and Year 1 discuss the autumn term planning strategies and where applicable tailor it to the needs/interests of the cohort.
- Staff will use the early learning goals objectives when appropriate. Reception plans are adapted to enable guided group work and challenges and to enable the children to take more responsibility for their learning.
- Activities are interactive, with a mixture of adult led and child initiated. The plans follow the EYFS curriculum, with challenges for the children who are ready.

6 Two-year-old checks

- At New Road Nursery the Two-year-old checks are completed in the term before a child turns 3.
- The Key Person completes the progress check (see appendix), and the health summary is completed by the parent/carer.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) progress check at age two focuses on the three prime areas of learning:

- communication
- personal, social and emotional development
- physical development
- The parent/s or carers are invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss the outcomes.
- A copy of the progress check is kept by Nursery and parents.

7 Funding

7.1 2 Year Olds

2 Year Olds

Your 2 year old can get 15 hours of free childcare a week if you live in England and you or your child get some extra support.

You'll get these 15 hours for 38 weeks of the year. You may be able to get free childcare for more than 38 weeks a year if you take fewer hours over more weeks.

You'll be eligible if you get any of the following extra support:

- you get Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax (not including benefit payments)
- you get Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- you get the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- your child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan, also known as an EHCP
- your child gets Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- your child has left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order

A child is also eligible if they're in care.

7.2 3 and 4 Year Olds

30 Free Hours Childcare

The government's 30-hours funded childcare places for working parents of three- and four-year-olds differs from the 15 hours childcare offer (see below).

You will be eligible for the 30-hour funded childcare offer if:

- You earn more than the equivalent of 16 hours at the national living wage or minimum wage per week: for example, over the next three months you expect to earn at least £1,813.76 - the National Living Wage if you are 25 or older.

There is no requirement to work a certain number of hours per week – it is all about how much you earn. This means if you only work 10 hours a week but earn £12 per hour, you will meet the minimum earning threshold. Apprentices are also eligible as long as they earn the equivalent to 16 hours at the apprentice minimum wage.

AND

- You earn less than £100,000 per year.
This applies if you are **self-employed or on a zero-hours contract** and expect to meet the earning criteria on average over the three months after you have applied for the 30-hours. HMRC will look at data such as your previous earnings to consider whether you are likely to meet the criteria and may contact you for further information if they are unsure.

If you are starting up your own business, you will not be expected to meet the minimum earning criteria in your first year of trading.

If you are not working but you expect to take up paid work within 31 days, you can still apply for 30 hours, as long as you expect to meet the income criteria over the coming three months.

If you are a single parent and meet the above criteria, you will be eligible for the 30 hours. If you live with a partner, you both must meet the above criteria. This still applies if one of you is not the child's parent – for example, if you have remarried or have started living with a new partner. If you are separated/divorced from your child's parent, the eligibility rules will only apply to the parent that the child normally lives with (and their new partner if they are part of the same household).

If you are on shared parental, maternity, paternity or adoption leave, you can still apply for the 30 hours. If you're on adoption leave for a child aged three- to four-years-old, you must return to work within 31 days of the date you first apply for 30 hours free childcare.

15 Free Hours Childcare

All 3 to 4-year-olds in England can get 570 free hours per year. It's usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, but you can choose to take fewer hours over more weeks, for example.

Some 3 to 4-year-olds are eligible for 30 hours free childcare a week. [Check if you're eligible and find out how to apply.](#)

The free early education and childcare:

- stops when your child starts in reception class (or reaches compulsory school age, if later)

You can get it from the term after your child's 3rd birthday.

8 Working with Parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/ or carers. Parents and/ or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/ or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. In our nursery each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs.

9 Health & Safety

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance, statutory requirements of the EYFS Framework and adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We encourage a healthy lifestyle and participate in the free fruit and milk for under-fives scheme. For our Reception children we provide the universal infant free school meal and the menu is regularly monitored with the chef. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal.

Fresh water is readily available for all children and we encourage children to bring in water bottles with water only.

Children are taught the importance of oral hygiene, keeping clean and washing their hands correctly.

More detailed information can be found in the school's Health and Safety Policy.

10 Inclusion

All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will be differentiated accordingly. In addition to this where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and where needed with liaison with the Special Needs Co-ordinator (please refer to the school's 'Special Needs Policy' for greater detail). The needs of children with English as an additional language will be met through planning and support alongside any other relevant support that is available.

PROGRESS CHECK AT AGE TWO FOR

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The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) progress check at age two focuses on the three prime areas of learning:

- communication
- personal, social and emotional development
- physical development

My early years setting has lots of fun activities in these three prime areas of learning (their curriculum). Sometimes I play independently. Sometimes the adults sensitively get involved to develop my play and learning or teach me something new.

Communication

How I am speaking and listening:

How the adults are helping me to develop my communication:

Personal, social and emotional development

How I am playing with other children, starting to share and take turns, and getting more independent:

How the adults are helping me when I am sad, angry or feeling shy:

Physical development

How I am using my large muscle and my small muscle skills:

How the adults are helping me to be physically active, like running and scooting, and develop my co-ordination, like kicking a ball or using a paint brush:

(If applicable)

My early years practitioner would like to talk about this checkpoint (from Development Matters) with you:

My early years practitioner would like to talk to you about giving me extra help:

My early years practitioner would like to bring in another professional to help me:

I have the following special educational need or disability:

This is how my early years practitioner is helping me to take part in all the play and learning (the early years curriculum):

- Changes to the room or special equipment for me to use:

- Extra help or special programmes for me to take part in:

Comment from the child's parent or carer

Right now, it is important for me to:

This is how my early years practitioner is going to help me:

This is how my parent or carer is going to help me:

Review date

Health summary for parents to fill in

Is your child:

Registered with a GP

Registered with a dentist

Under the care of any other health professional

Do you have any concerns about your child's:

Walking

Talking

Hearing

Sight

Happiness

Would you like help with your child's:

Eating and healthy weight

Toilet training

Hearing

Sight

Early help: stopping small issues from becoming big problems Would you like:

Advice from your early years practitioner

Advice from your health visitor

Referral to your local Sure Start Children's Centre

Referral to your local Family Hub