



# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Review date	By whom	Summary of changes made	Date ratified by governors/trustees	Date implemented
February 2026	Kate Allen	Updated references to Statutory Framework  Inclusion of information regarding toothbrushing		

## **Introduction and Aim**

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is an holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

At Redwood Primary School, we aim to ensure that all children learn and develop well and are given a broad range of knowledge and skills which provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. We believe that "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." (Statutory Framework 2025)

## **Objectives**

- To provide effective learning opportunities through well planned play experiences in a range of environments both inside and outside and with a mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities.
- To enable each child through high expectations, encouragement and access to high quality provision, play and interactions, to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally to their fullest potential.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunities for development.
- To encourage children to develop independence within an atmosphere of security, safety and strong relationships.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing, following instructions and respecting others.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work toward personal goals.
- To value the role parents and carers can play by working together in partnership.
- For children to leave the EYFS with the essential skills and attitudes to continue to be successful learners in KS1 and beyond.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and Curriculum**

Teaching in the EYFS at Redwood Primary School is delivered in accordance with the Government's statutory document "The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" (Sept 2025). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through 4 themes: "A Unique Child", "Positive Relationships", "Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults" and "the importance of learning and development".

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. Three of these areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn, to form relationships and thrive. They underpin children's learning in all other areas and are known as the Prime Areas.

The Prime Areas are:

- **Communication and Language** – Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking  
“The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial.” (Statutory framework 1.6)
- **Physical Development** – Gross motor skills and Fine motor skills  
“Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives” (Statutory framework 1.6)
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Making relationships, Managing self and Self-regulation  
“Children’s personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development.” (Statutory framework 1.6)

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge to enable children to succeed at school and ultimately to participate successfully in society.

The specific areas are:

- **Literacy** – Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics** Number and Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the World** – People and Communities, The Natural World, Past and Present
- **Expressive arts and Design** – Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. All teachers in FS1 and FS2 plan activities in their classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child’s attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- **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 their own achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children are given space to develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Throughout the Foundation Stage, staff plan around topic themes based on the interests of the children. The daily planning sheets indicate the continuous provision and enhancements, both inside and out, as well as the teacher-led/initiated activities and planned times for child-initiated activities. Practitioners endeavour to consider individual needs, interests and stage of

development and plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child. The EYFS curriculum offers the children opportunities to participate in planned play activities both indoors and outdoors, as well as whole class, group and adult led activities. The curriculum gives the children the space to initiate activities of their own and provides periods for quality uninterrupted play to take place. Our planning is underpinned by a journey through the non-statutory Development Matters pathway guidance to ensure progression throughout the EYFS for both planned activities and the interactions and responses to child-initiated play.

Teaching in the EYFS also incorporates systematic high-quality phonic work based on Phase 1 Letters and Sounds activities (FS1) and Read Write Inc. (FS1 and FS2). In FS2, Phonics is taught as a discrete lesson in small differentiated groups across the year group, which lead to streaming across FS2 and KS2 later in the year. Both FS1 and FS2 use the secure Foundation Stage outdoor area for the development of gross motor skills as well as the school playground and hall.

## **Play**

Learning through play is a central part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe that children learn best from activities and first-hand experiences that interest and inspire them. “Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children’s interests, responding to each child’s emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.” (Statutory framework 1.16)

Using children’s interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build on and revisit prior learning and experience practical learning at their own level and pace. Our ‘Plan, Do, Review’ sessions give the children the opportunities to plan their play, and think about what they have achieved and enjoyed during their self-led activities. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, and through it they learn to adapt, communicate, negotiate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe that it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending through skilful interactions and interventions to extend learning without “taking over”. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play supported by adults and adult led activities is very important to us.

## **Reading**

Reading and stories are an essential part of the day. We want to make sure that our children develop a real love of books and are excited and inspired by story time. We ensure that they will leave EYFS with a bank of stories (both traditional and modern) that they know well. We make sure that there is always time for a class story at the end of the session but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. All areas of the classrooms contain

relevant books, eg cookery books in the home corner, books about building and materials in the construction areas and books about the world around us in the small world area. We are always mindful of the rich cultural mix of children we have at Redwood, and provide books with examples of many different languages alongside English to promote recognition of home language script as well as pride in cultural heritage.

FS1 children have daily access to the Nursery library and are encouraged to borrow books on a regular basis. Children also take home 'bedtime bags' with a range of stories plus a teddy to cuddle while their adult reads to them, engendering an emotional link between reading and comfort.

FS2 children take home a picture book without words at the start of the Reception year to practise pre-reading skills such as holding the book the right way, turning pages, and using pictures for inference. These books are supported by 5 'star' words which help to increase vocabulary when talking with their adult at home about the book, as well as help those adults to discuss the book with their child. Later on, children take home a worded reading book matched to their phonic ability. All children take a library book home to enjoy and all books are changed on a weekly basis. In the Autumn term, children also take home a phonics book to enable them to practise the Set 1 sounds they have learnt with their adults at home. Sounds are added to this every week after they are taught.

### **Monitoring and Assessment**

Assessment of learning takes place through observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. All staff members are involved in observing children and use their observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children, underpinned by the guidance of Development Matters. "Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence." (Statutory framework 2.2) Continuous monitoring of progress is carried out throughout the phase.

On entry to Nursery we carry out baseline assessments for each child and N2 children are assessed termly. In FS2 the national RBA is carried out and baseline assessments are carried out for all children not transferring from Redwood FS1. All children are assessed using the Language Link programme to ensure that interactions can be focused on parts of language some children may need to work on and develop. Termly assessments continue to track progress across all areas of learning.

At the end of FS2 the EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and achievements and is used to inform transition to Year 1. The on-going assessments are used to inform support and intervention for pupils. The SENDCO (Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator) and Deputy SENDCO is involved in provision relating to pupils with additional or special educational needs.

Staff are regularly involved in moderating judgements relating to assessments during Foundation Stage Phase meetings. FS2 staff have regular contacts and meetings with colleagues in other settings to ensure Profile judgements are accurate.

In consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, the monitoring of the EYFS may also take the form of:

- Reviewing planning
- Observation of lessons or demonstration lessons
- Collating evidence of work carried out or observations including photographs
- Discussions with staff and children
- Staff meetings and INSET
- Informing staff of new developments and initiatives

### **Partnership with parents and carers**

Parents and carers are a child's first and most important educator and therefore we work very closely to ensure that they are involved in what we do at school. We want parents to feel that they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. We offer doorstep visits for children before they start Nursery which are invaluable in beginning the home-school relationship in a positive and caring way. Before children start school, parents are invited to an information session as well as a 1:1 chat with their child's class teacher. All children are given an opportunity to visit the setting for a 'Stay and Play' session before they begin Reception Families are also invited to a Teddy Bears' Picnic to start the relationships with other children, families and staff which will become so important as their school life begins..

We offer regular opportunities for parents to come into school to work alongside their child and learn about the curriculum. We invite parents and important grown-ups, eg grandparents, aunts, uncles etc, into school every half term for a variety of engagement events. These include an Autumn walk in the park, craft activities, a Christmas Nativity play and a Summer picnic, as well as various other events linked to the learning at the time.

In FS2 parents are invited to attend a Parents' Information Evening in the Autumn Term to share what our day in Reception looks like and to give information regarding the teaching of Reading, Writing and Maths. Parents are also invited to Parent Meetings twice a year, one in the Autumn Term and another in the Spring Term. They receive a written report in the summer term which includes information about their child's attainment in relation to the ELGs (Early Learning Goals). In Nursery parents are telephoned after their child has been in Nursery for around 4 weeks to talk about how they are settling and parents' evenings are offered regularly throughout the year. Teachers are available most mornings and evenings to talk and discuss more urgent matters.

## **The Role of the EYFS Phase Leader**

The EYFS Phase Leader will:

- Provide professional leadership and management to secure high quality teaching, effective use of resources and improved standards of learning and achievement for all pupils
- Support, mentor, guide and motivate colleagues
- Monitor effectiveness of teaching and learning
- Identify any needs in the Foundation Stage and consider these in relation to the overall needs of the school
- Have an overview of progress and achievement within the EYFS, analyse data and use this to inform school improvement planning.
- Encourage opportunities for continuous professional development through identifying appropriate courses and training.

## **Organisation and Staffing**

Children are admitted to our 50 place Nursery after their third birthday in accordance with the Nursery Admissions policy. Children attend for 15 hours or 30 hours and parents/carers have a choice of sessions during the week (see Nursery Admissions Policy).

Visits and induction arrangements are carried out in accordance with the FS1 Induction Programme. A transition programme is also in place for children moving from FS1 to FS2.

Children are admitted to FS2 on a 1 point entry system in accordance with the LA Admissions Policy. They transfer to FS2 at the start of the academic year during which they will be 5 years old. Parents have the right to defer admission to school until the term after their child's fifth birthday.

Staffing in FS1 consists of 1 Teacher, an HLTA and a number of Teaching Assistants depending on the number and needs of the children. The ratio of children to staff is 1:13 in compliance with the statutory framework guidance for maintained nursery classes and units. Additional support for children with SEND may be provided as appropriate.

In FS2 children are grouped into classes not exceeding 30 pupils in accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act and LA guidelines on Infant class sizes and statutory framework guidance. (This number can be exceeded where the LA grants an admissions appeal).

Each FS2 class has a teacher and there is a team of Teaching Assistants. Additional support may be provided for children with SEND as appropriate.

Throughout the phase children with EAL receive some additional support as appropriate.

## **Safeguarding and Welfare in the EYFS**

This is in accordance with "The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the EYFS" from the Statutory Framework for the EYFS Section 3 (Sept 2025). All practitioners in the EYFS hold a Paediatric First Aid Certificate and safer eating protocols are observed vigilantly.

As part of the government initiative to combat tooth decay within deprived areas, Redwood is part of a supervised daily toothbrushing initiative. This initiative, supporting the EYFS Framework which states that practitioners must promote good oral health in settings, means we are provided with free toothbrushes and paste and children are supervised brushing their teeth every day at school. This helps to improve oral health, reduce hospital admissions, and promote daily routines.

We work closely with Health care professionals such as the Community Paediatrician, School Nurse Team, Health visitor service, Speech Therapists and other external agencies.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We have a commitment to providing a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of children. This is done by setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupils' diverse learning needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning. We aim to meet the needs of all children by responding to their areas of interest. Provision is put in place for children with EAL and SEND. This may include targeted support within the classroom and other small group or 1:1 work.

### **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed in line with the School Policy Review Cycle.