Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Policy Information

Date of last review:	3.11.25	**Review period:**	2 yearly
Date ratified by Local Givernors:		**Policy owner:**	Mrs V. Callaghan

Reviews/revisions

Review date	Changes made	By whom
November 2027		

Intent

At Princefield First School we want all of our children to have the best possible start to their learning journey. We strive to ensure that all our Early Years pupils receive high-quality care, teaching and support, providing a safe and nurturing environment, which allows them to grow, explore and achieve their full potential. Our children are at the centre of all that we do.

We want all our children to be happy, confident and well-rounded children, who feel safe, secure and valued in our Nursery and Reception classes, where they can develop a life-long love of learning.

The intent of our Early Years education at Princefield is to provide a creative, inspiring and challenging curriculum, supporting all pupils to achieve or exceed their individual targets and to provide opportunities for our children to develop as independent, confident, successful learners with high aspirations who know how to make a positive contribution to their community and our wider society (see our EY vision statement).

This policy aims to ensure:

•That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- That every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2025.

Implementation

Structure of our EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Princefield, most children start Nursery the term after their third birthday and complete the Foundation Stage at the end of the Reception year. These years lay the foundations for the following Key Stages (KS1 and KS2).

At Princefield, we have an intake policy for both the Nursery and Reception classes, which is in line with recommendations made by Staffordshire County Council. Some children attend other settings and start at Princefield First School in Reception.

We have one Nursery class, which is led by a Nursery Manager and 2 Reception classes of up to 30 pupils each. Our Early Years is led by our Early Years Lead / Qualified Teacher.

In Nursery we offer flexible sessions using the 15 or 30 hours government funding and the option to pay for extra top-up sessions.

In Nursery we group our children into pre-school children (Nursery Ducks group) and 4 and 5 term children (Nursery Ducklings group).

Curriculum
Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS Statutory Framework that applies from September 2025. We use government curriculum guidance 'Development Matters' to create our Early Years Curriculum.

The EYFS framework includes 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

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

We recognise that not just what children learn, but how they learn is equally important and at Princefield we use a mix of approaches to teach through play, adult modelling, peer interactions and direct and purposeful adult teaching.

In planning and guiding what children learn, we also reflect on the different rates at which children develop and adapt staff approaches as needed.

We use the characteristics of effective teaching and learning to ensure that our children develop key learning skills to support their leaning in other curriculum areas throughout their school life. These are;

• **playing and exploring –** encouraging our children to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

• **active learning –** ensuring concentration, perseverance and persistence if they encounter difficulties, setting their own goals and celebrating their achievements

• **creating and thinking critically –** encouraging children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between their ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Planning for learning and development
Our Curriculum is ambitious for all of our children.

Our Curriculum is adapted depending on the needs and interests of each cohort and follows a rolling program from Nursery Ducklings class through to the end of the Reception year to ensure progression and development of skills.

The four overarching principles that guide our practice are:
• A Unique Child • Positive Relationships • Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults • Learning and Development

A Unique Child
'Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.'
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025)

We value the diversity of individuals within our school, all children are treated fairly. We aim to give the children equality of opportunity and for all our children to develop a full range of learning skills by stretching and challenging them, whether they attend on a part-time or full-time basis and regardless of their individual starting points.

We promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference, so children can, from an early age, value diversity in others, work collaboratively and cooperatively and make a positive contribution to our society.

We set high and challenging expectations by planning to meet and to exceed the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds and children from different ethnic groups and linguistic backgrounds.

At Princefield we recognise the importance of early identification of children who may have special educational needs. Following initial baseline assessments of all our children when they start at Princefield our children are then carefully and continually monitored to ensure difficulties and challenges are quickly identified and acted upon. When needed, children at risk of falling behind will be given extra support to fulfil their potential and parents are consulted at all times throughout this process.

Our Special Needs Co-ordinator works closely with all our Early Years staff to ensure children receive appropriate external support when needed and to ensure that our SEND pupils make progress as expected.

English as an additional language
For children whose home language is not English, we work with parents to support children's learning of their own home language alongside English taught within our school. We provide additional support to ensure all children reach a good standard of English to prepare them to fully access KS1 teaching and learning. We work closely with parents/carers to identify and support if children have a language delay.

Positive Relationships
'Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships'
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025)

We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is specifically tailored to meet their individual needs.

The importance of developing a trusting and caring relationship between key worker and each individual child is paramount. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

We recognise that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We understand that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents/ carers. We develop strong relationships with parents and work together to ensure a positive impact on our children's learning and development.

Before the children start in our Early Years, we share information with parents about our setting, daily routines, how their children will learn in our Early Years provision and how parents can support their children with their next steps at home. We give children and parents opportunity to meet our Early Years staff. We inform parents who their children's key worker will be and we build that relationship before our children start in our Early Years setting.

To ensure that starting Nursery and School is as smooth and easy as possible, for both the children and parents we have devised an induction programme, during which the children will have the opportunity to spend time with our staff and in the learning environment before their actual start date.

Once children are attending our setting, parents/carers are kept fully informed with their child's progress and development through Tapestry our online learning journal, Class Dojo, regular open events and daily face to face contact. We share our weekly learning and experiences online with parents and offer suggestions on how to help at home.

Nursery and Reception staff complete interim and end of year reports and hold regular Parents evenings over the academic year.

The EYFS profile, completed at the end of the Reception year, helps to provide our parents/carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities at the end of the Foundation Stage, showing them their child's readiness for Year One.

Enabling Environments

'Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.' (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025)

We aim to offer a rich and varied environment in our Foundation Stage, which is well organised and stimulating and based on the EYFS principles and requirements, using the key principles of Early Excellence.

Our Nursery and Reception learning environments ensure that all children feel valued, secure, safe and confident in the classroom, both indoors and outdoors, so that they can develop happily and to their full potential.

Our continuous provision provides resources and areas to allow our pupils to follow and develop their own interests. There are designed areas where our children can choose to be active or quiet and our environment supports learning in all our curriculum areas. We plan our resources to be

stimulating and children are able to find and locate them independently, allowing the children to explore and learn and build on experiences that they already have.

At Princefield we enhance the children's learning offering additional resources and learning opportunities based on our themes, children's needs and next steps and our children's own interests. We provide opportunity for our children to practise and consolidate skills taught during adult led teaching, to help support the development of our children's understanding in a range of different contexts.

We recognise that high quality adult interactions are key to developing and extending learning and adults daily engage with our children in our learning environments to allow for extending skills, understanding and to develop language and vocabulary.

This provides a solid foundation on which to build all future aspects of learning and development by supporting and promoting the children's:

- **personal, social and emotional well-being:** by promoting an inclusive ethos and by providing opportunities for each child to develop as an individual and to feel a valued member of our community with a strong, positive self-image
- **positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning:** in particular an enthusiasm for knowledge and learning and confidence in their ability to be successful learners
- **social skills:** in particular by providing opportunities that enable them to learn how to cooperate, respect and work harmoniously alongside and with each other
- **attention skills and persistence:** in particular the capacity to concentrate on their individual or group tasks
- **language and communication:** with opportunities for all the children to speak, listen and communicate in a wide range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to practise and extend their vocabulary and communication skills in a range of contexts
- **physical development:** with opportunities for all children to develop and practise their coordination, control, manipulation and movement and to increase their understanding of how their bodies work and what they need to do to be healthy and safe. Develop and practise fine motor skills, including using small tools to provide develop skills needed for later writing
- **reading and writing:** with opportunities for all the children to explore, enjoy, learn about and use words and a broad range of texts and genres (including fiction, non-fiction, poems and rhymes) in a broad range of contexts and to experience a rich variety of books to develop a love of reading
- **mathematics:** with opportunities for all the children to develop their understanding of numeracy, problem solving, reasoning, measurement, shape, space and pattern by providing a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, learn, enjoy, practise making connections and talk about them
- **understanding of the world:** with opportunities for all children to solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan and question in a variety of contexts and to explore and find out about their environment and people and places that have significance in their lives
- **information and communication technology:** with opportunities for the children to find out about and identify uses of everyday technology and use communication technology to support and extend learning
- **creative development:** with opportunities for all the children to explore, respond, share and express their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design and technology, music, movement, dance and imaginative and role play activities

Learning and Development
‘Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).’
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025)

At Princefield, we recognise that all of our children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates and that planning and assessment is the key to effective learning.

We spend time observing the children, following and developing their interests with high quality adult interactions, and planning challenging activities and experiences to extend their knowledge and skills.
We teach through progressive themes, which enable our children to experience awe and wonder at the wider world and give our children opportunity to develop their own interests to ensure that all our children develop a love for learning that will continue into the next stage of their school learning journey.

In our Nursery, we focus on the 3 prime areas, where our children have daily adult led ‘Prime Time’ with their key worker, in order to secure a solid foundation in the prime areas for all our children. This is built upon in our Reception classes, where we provide our children with continued opportunity to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning.

In Reception our children have a broad and balanced curriculum, which places a greater emphasis on teaching the essential skills in the 4 specific areas, in order to develop our children’s language and extend their vocabulary. This teaching includes daily adult-led teaching sessions of Phonics and Reading, Literacy (following recommendations from the Reading Framework (2023) and Writing Frameworks (2025), fine motor skills and Maths.

We value and place high importance on play in our Early Years classes, allowing children to lead their own play and take part in play and learning that is guided by adults, with high quality interactions.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm and positive interactions.

We offer opportunity for children to learn as they explore, set their own goals and solve problems.

When a child may have a special educational need or disability, we identify a specific need as early as possible and consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements
We actively promote good oral health as well as good health in general, manage behaviour, and maintain records, policies and procedures for children who are ill or infectious in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025) and our individual school and academy policies.

At Princefield we ensure that all practitioners are suitably qualified, trained and are part of a continual programme of professional development.

In line with the statutory Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements, the school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy safeguarding leads who provide support and guidance to all staff on an on-going basis and on any specific safeguarding issue as required. (See Academy Safeguarding and Welfare policy). DSL training is renewed every 2 years.

Documented in the academy policies on safeguarding and welfare are clear guidelines on whistleblowing, the non-use of personal mobile phones and personal recording equipment by all staff in the presence of children. There is also a strict procedure in place for all visitors to the school and clear process for when and how to report any concerns.

All our EY staff receive safeguarding and PREVENT training and follow the government's statutory guidance on 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

We follow up on all child absences in line with the EY statutory framework (2025) – see academy attendance policy.

All Early Years Staff are checked for suitability for working with children and relevant qualifications, checks and training and references are verified following the EY statutory framework (2025) and academy safer recruitment policy.

All new staff receive induction training from SLT before starting to support them to understand and undertake their specific roles and responsibilities. This includes key information on emergency procedures, safeguarding, child-protection and health and safety.

Risk Assessments
We take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children are safe and not exposed to risks while in school and on visits following our EY and academy risk assessment policies.
Daily environment and resource risk assessments are displayed in classrooms and checked daily and risks are removed or minimalised as soon as possible.

Child to staff ratios are followed at all times following the EY statutory framework (2025).

Intimate care
We follow our academy policy on intimate hygiene care and toileting, ensuring children's privacy and safeguarding and support needs are met at all times (see academy policy).

We provide suitable sleeping arrangements for children who need to sleep and check on sleeping children frequently (following the EY statutory framework, 2025).

Medical
Staff follow the EY statutory framework (2025) and academy staff policy in regard to medications when working with children in school.

We follow an academy policy which clearly identifies procedures for administering medicines to children (see academy medicine policy).

Paediatric First Aid
All EY staff hold a current paediatric first aid (FFA) certificate and is on the premises and available at all times when children are present. Training is renewed every 3 years. New staff are trained after starting work in our Early Years and are then included in our ratios. All staff certificates are displayed in each classroom.

We follow the EY statutory framework (2025) for recording all incidents and accidents and inform parents of accidents in school and any treatment on the same day or as soon as is possible.

Safer Eating
Our children are supervised at all times and are within sight and hearing of staff at all times when eating (following the EY statutory framework, 2025).

Before a child starts in our Early Years we obtain information from parents about any special dietary requirements, food allergies, food intolerances and food preferences. These are shared with all staff working with the preparation of food in school and with all staff who are supervising food eating and working with individual children.

Food is prepared and cut to prevent incidents of choking and any choking incidents are recorded and reported in line with the EY statutory framework, 2025 and our academy policy.

EY staff all hold a paediatric first aid qualification and are aware of the symptoms and treatment for allergies and anaphylaxis. We are mindful that allergies can begin at anytime and we create individual health care plans for our children who have an allergy (see academy policy on safer food).

Drinking water is available to all our children at all times.

Supervisions
All our EY staff have supervision which provides support, coaching and training. Our supervisions are designed to promote the interests of our children and ensure a culture of teamwork, mutual support and continuous improvement. These include discussion of issues as they arise and ensuring solutions, child-protection, and coaching to improve staff effectiveness.

IMPACT

Assessment
Assessment is central to the success of pupil progress. We implement a robust and responsive system of formative and summative assessment to track progress, identify learning gaps early, and ensure that no child is left behind in their learning and development.
A range of assessments are used to accurately baseline all our new starters and ensure they are supported at the right level from the outset.

We use our staff's key and in-depth knowledge of our children and our expert professional judgement and knowledge of EY child development to make and moderate our assessment judgements.

At Princefield we recognise that parents know their children best and we work closely with parents using their own observations of their child to support planning of next steps in their child's learning.

Formative assessment is embedded in daily Early Years classroom practice and is used to:

- Monitor pupil's understanding during adult-led teaching sessions and during interactions
- Identify children who require same-day intervention or additional support
- Inform the adaptation of teaching in real time, ensuring children receive timely reinforcement and repeated practice of skills as and when needed

Our staff assess through continuous observations, oral responses, and child play activities, using these insights to guide our instruction, plan next steps and address individual needs throughout the school day.

Assessment outcomes are used to:

- Inform and adapt daily teaching, ensuring teaching and next steps are tailored to the needs of each class and individual pupils.
- Track the progress of all pupils, including vulnerable groups and those with SEND.
- Guide same-day interventions and rapid catch-up sessions, so that misconceptions are addressed immediately and children can continue their next steps in learning without falling behind.

Staff use assessment data to plan tailored interventions, helping each child to consolidate key knowledge and skills with accuracy and confidence.

Summative assessments are conducted through activities designed for pupils to show their knowledge and understanding in play in a range of contexts. Pupils' development and skills are assessed formally each term to allow for;

- Insight for Early Years staff, Early Years Lead, and Senior Leaders to analyse progress and identify specific gaps
- Evidence to guide targeted interventions and adjust teaching strategies.
- Data to support strategic monitoring by SLT, ensuring that trends in attainment are addressed and that vulnerable learners receive appropriate support.

Our Early Years staff regularly moderate assessments and understanding of individual pupil's progress and understanding through meetings across our staff, across Academy schools and through external support.

- We use both formative classroom assessments and scheduled summative assessments to evaluate progress.
- Data is used to ensure pupils are on track and to implement additional support where necessary.
- Regular tracking allows teachers and leaders to monitor cohort performance and adjust planning or provision strategically.

Children who are not meeting expected milestones are reassessed regularly to monitor their response to intervention.

Statutory Assessment – Reception Baseline Assessment

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception at any point in the academic year, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is administered by qualified staff following the requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2025

Statutory Assessment – Reception Early Years Profile

In the final term of Reception, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child in our Reception classes who is continuing into KS1 in the following academic year. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, where staff make a holistic, best-fit judgment indicating whether each child is:

• Meeting expected levels of development ('expected')

• Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

We share and discuss each child's EY profile with our Year 1 teachers as part of our planned transition into KS1 process.

We share each child's EY profile with parents and offer opportunity to discuss outcomes.

Our EY profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other academy schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Evaluating Impact

The impact of our EY curriculum is measured through formal assessments and also through what children can remember, apply, and articulate in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts, through staff knowledge of each individual child.

Our comprehensive assessment, combined with high-quality, structured instruction and targeted intervention, ensures that all of our Early Years pupils are supported to make strong and sustained progress. Using regular assessment, followed by responsive teaching and support/intervention when needed, allows us to address all our pupil's individual needs.

By remaining focused on inclusion and equity, we are committed to closing attainment gaps and ensuring that every child develops the skills necessary to be Key Stage One ready.

This Early Years policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

V. Callaghan (Early Years Lead) – August 2025