

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Beeches Primary School



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This policy is written for the school's Reception provision and should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, attendance, SEND, behaviour, medical needs, health and safety, online safety, data protection and complaints policies.

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

“Every child should have the opportunity to grow, play, learn and thrive.”

Department for Education, Giving every child the best start in life (2025)

At The Beeches Primary School, we recognise Reception as a vital foundation year in which children develop the knowledge, skills, relationships, confidence and dispositions that support their success throughout primary school and beyond. We are committed to providing every child with a high-quality, inclusive and ambitious early education that enables them to achieve and thrive.

This policy sets out how The Beeches Primary School delivers the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children in Reception. It applies to Reception-aged pupils only and reflects the statutory requirements in force from 1 September 2026.

The school follows the Department for Education (DfE) Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026). The framework sets mandatory learning and development, assessment, safeguarding and welfare requirements. Where the framework uses “must”, the requirement is mandatory; where it uses “should”, the school takes the guidance into account and follows it unless there is a good reason not to.

This policy also has regard, where relevant to Reception pupils, to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the Prevent duty guidance, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, statutory school attendance guidance, current Reception Baseline Assessment arrangements, the EYFS Profile handbook, DfE EYFS nutrition guidance and DfE screen use guidance.

2. Aims

At The Beeches Primary School, we aim to give every Reception child a secure, ambitious and joyful start to school. We will:

- provide a happy, safe, nurturing, inclusive and stimulating environment in which children feel secure and develop positive relationships;
- deliver a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum through the seven areas of learning, with planned, purposeful play and appropriate adult-led teaching;
- prioritise communication and language, early reading, phonics, writing and mathematics while valuing all areas of learning equally;
- promote independence, curiosity, creativity, resilience, self-regulation, collaboration and positive attitudes to learning;
- identify children’s strengths and needs early, including SEND, communication needs and barriers arising from disadvantage or English as an additional language (EAL), and provide timely support;

- work in genuine partnership with parents and carers, recognising them as children's first and most enduring educators;
- promote equality of opportunity and make reasonable adjustments so that all children can participate, belong and succeed; and
- keep children healthy, safe and well and ensure that safeguarding is integral to everyday practice.

3. EYFS principles and characteristics of effective teaching and learning

Our practice is shaped by the four overarching EYFS principles: every child is a unique child; children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships; children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults who respond to their interests and needs; and children develop and learn at different rates.

Practitioners support the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning: playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically. Adults observe, interact, model, question, explain and extend learning while protecting sustained periods in which children can investigate, practise, revisit ideas and develop their own lines of enquiry.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child:** We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop positive attitudes to learning.
- **Positive relationships:** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relations and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relations with the children and their families.
- **Enabling Environments:** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable learning activities and experiences to extend their learning.
- **Learning and development:** The Reception setting is organised to allow the children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, be thoughtful, be creative, be independent and be collaborative. The learning environment is set up in learning areas where children are able to find, locate and use equipment and resources independently.

At The Beeches Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

4. Learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The educational programmes in the statutory framework form the basis of our Reception curriculum. The early learning goals (ELGs) summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have gained by the end of the EYFS; they are used for the statutory end-of-Reception assessment and are not a curriculum or a checklist for day-to-day teaching.

At The Beeches Primary School, our Reception curriculum provides children with rich and varied experiences across all seven areas of learning and development. We recognise the particular importance of the three prime areas in building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Learning is delivered through a balance of planned, purposeful play, child-initiated learning and adult-led teaching. Practitioners consider the individual needs, interests and development of each child and use this knowledge to provide challenging and enjoyable experiences across all areas of learning.

Our curriculum is language-rich and promotes frequent high-quality conversations, storytelling, rhyme, poetry, non-fiction, vocabulary development and sustained shared thinking. It includes daily opportunities for physical development, creative expression, exploration of the natural and social world, mathematical thinking, early reading and writing, and personal, social and emotional development.

5. Phonics, early reading and writing

The school uses Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised as its systematic synthetic phonics programme. Reception children are taught the programme in line with its progression, with

daily phonics teaching and prompt additional practice (“keep-up”) for children who need it. Reading practice is designed to develop decoding, prosody and comprehension, alongside regular sharing of high-quality books to develop vocabulary, comprehension and a love of reading.

Children have frequent opportunities to mark-make and write for meaningful purposes across the provision. Adults model oral composition, transcription, letter formation and application of phonics. Expectations are developmentally appropriate and are adapted where children have additional needs.

6. Mathematics

Mathematics teaching develops secure foundations in number and numerical patterns as well as rich mathematical language and reasoning. Children learn through direct teaching, practical experiences, routines, games, stories, manipulatives and purposeful play. The school’s agreed Reception mathematics approach is used to sequence learning and to provide appropriate challenge and support.

7. Planning and pedagogy

Planning begins with the statutory educational programmes, the school’s curriculum intent, what children already know and can do, and what they need to learn next. Long- and medium-term plans provide coherence and progression; short-term planning remains responsive to assessment, children’s interests and emerging needs.

The Reception day provides a developmentally appropriate balance of adult-led teaching, guided practice and child-initiated learning. “In the moment” responses may be used to deepen learning, address misconceptions, introduce vocabulary or provide timely support. Children have access to high-quality indoor and outdoor provision and opportunities to revisit and apply taught knowledge and skills independently.

Good planning is key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in Reception at The Beeches are involved in this process.

- **Long Term Planning:** We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six terms and the ELGs are distributed over the terms to determine broad and balanced coverage.
- **Medium Term Planning:** We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. We include links between different areas of learning and development for the use of ICT.
- **Short Term Planning:** We identify specific learning objectives and plan activities, differentiation, assessments, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the needs of the children on a weekly basis. Planning reflects and supports the characteristics

if effective learning and the different ways children learn: play and exploration, active learning and creative and critical thinking.

- **In the Moment Planning:** All staff have the freedom to change and develop their planning and 'plan' in the moment based on what a child or group of children are doing, interested in, need developmentally or intellectually in order to ensure the best learning opportunities possible for all our learners.

8. Assessment, recording and reporting

Assessment is proportionate and is used to understand children's progress and needs and to shape teaching. Ongoing formative assessment is based on practitioners' professional knowledge of children, day-to-day observation and interaction, and information shared by parents and carers. The EYFS framework does not require written records of ongoing observations or physical evidence to prove judgements, and assessment must not create excessive paperwork or long breaks from interaction with children.

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

The statutory RBA is administered to eligible Reception pupils within the first six weeks of starting Reception, including pupils who join later in the academic year, in accordance with the current Standards and Testing Agency (STA) assessment and reporting arrangements and administration guidance. It is a one-to-one assessment of early mathematics and early literacy, communication and language. The RBA is distinct from the school's ongoing formative assessment and must not be used to narrow or determine the Reception curriculum.

For 2026/27, the school follows the digital RBA administration requirements, including practitioner training, accessibility arrangements and modified administration guidance where required. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring statutory administration requirements are met.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

The EYFS Profile is completed for each eligible child in the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches age five, no later than 30 June. Each child is assessed against all 17 ELGs as either "expected" or "emerging", using practitioners' professional knowledge and judgement. The Profile must be completed for children with SEND, with reasonable adjustments to the assessment process as appropriate.

EYFS Profile outcomes are shared with parents/carers and Year 1 teachers and are reported to the local authority as required. Transition discussions give Year 1 staff a rounded picture of each child's learning, development, strengths and support needs.

9. Inclusion, SEND and EAL

The school is committed to inclusive practice. We have regard to the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years and the Equality Act 2010. Practitioners identify emerging needs early, work with the SENCO and parents/carers, use a graduated approach where appropriate, make

reasonable adjustments and seek specialist advice when needed. Provision is adapted so that children with SEND can access the curriculum, communicate, participate and develop independence.

For children whose home language is not English, practitioners take reasonable steps to provide opportunities to develop and use the home language in play and learning, while ensuring sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English. Assessment distinguishes, as far as possible, between language acquisition and possible special educational needs.

10. The learning environment and outdoor provision

Reception classrooms and outdoor spaces are organised to be welcoming, accessible, safe and stimulating. Resources are selected and stored to promote independence, purposeful play, talk, exploration and challenge. Children are taught how to use spaces and resources safely and respectfully. Outdoor learning is an integral part of the curriculum and is planned with the same attention to learning, inclusion, supervision and safety as indoor provision.

Risk is managed rather than eliminated. Staff undertake appropriate checks and risk assessment and teach children to recognise and manage age-appropriate risks. Children do not leave the premises unsupervised and are released only to adults authorised by parents/carers in accordance with school procedures.

11. Staffing, supervision and the key person

Staffing arrangements must meet children's needs and ensure their safety. Reception pupils must usually be within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing. Supervision is especially important while children are eating, outdoors, on visits and during transitions around the school.

Each Reception child is assigned a key person. In a school Reception context this will normally be the class teacher, supported by the class team. The key-person approach helps children settle, supports individual care and learning needs, and strengthens relationships with parents/carers.

Reception classes in maintained schools and academies are subject to infant class size legislation: ordinary teaching sessions are limited to 30 pupils per school teacher, subject to permitted exceptions. Teaching assistants and other support staff do not count as a "school teacher" for this purpose. Students, long-term volunteers and apprentices are only counted in EYFS ratios where the statutory conditions on age, suitability, competence, responsibility, level of study and paediatric first aid are met; this does not alter infant class size requirements.

12. Staff suitability, recruitment, training and supervision

The school follows KCSIE 2026, the EYFS statutory framework and the school's safer recruitment procedures. Appropriate pre-employment checks are completed before staff begin work. The strengthened EYFS requirements from September 2026 include enhanced criminal records checks for volunteers, including supervised volunteers, and prevent new

employees from commencing employment before the required check has been received. Staff must disclose information that may affect their suitability to work with children in line with statutory requirements and school procedures.

At least one written reference must be obtained before recruitment for staff, students and volunteers covered by the EYFS requirement. References are verified and discrepancies or safeguarding concerns are resolved before appointment is confirmed. The school follows its Single Central Record and safer recruitment procedures.

All Reception staff receive induction and ongoing training appropriate to their role. Safeguarding training is renewed and updated in line with KCSIE, the EYFS framework and local safeguarding arrangements. Staff have access to supervision, support and opportunities to discuss children's development, safeguarding concerns and their own professional practice.

13. Safeguarding and child protection

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has lead responsibility for safeguarding and liaison with children's social care and local safeguarding partners. All staff working with Reception children must read KCSIE 2026 Part One in full and follow the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff code of conduct and reporting procedures.

Staff remain alert to concerns in a child's life at home, in school or elsewhere, including abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, child-on-child abuse, online harm, exploitation and risks of radicalisation. Concerns are reported immediately through the school's safeguarding procedures. Where there is concern about a child's safety or welfare, referrals are made to local authority children's social care and, in an emergency, the police, in line with local procedures, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and KCSIE 2026.

The school has procedures for allegations or concerns about adults working with children, low-level concerns, whistleblowing, safer recruitment, mobile phones/cameras and other devices with imaging or sharing capability. Staff know how to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and how to use external whistleblowing routes if necessary.

14. Prevent duty and fundamental British values

The school has due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Reception staff understand that Prevent is part of safeguarding and know how to report concerns through the DSL. Practice is age-appropriate and embedded through a culture that promotes respect, inclusion, positive relationships, listening to others, making choices, understanding rules and developing a sense of right and wrong; it does not involve inappropriate political discussion with young children.

15. Attendance, absence and children missing education

Regular attendance supports children's learning, relationships and safeguarding. The school follows its Attendance Policy and the DfE statutory guidance Working Together to Improve

School Attendance. Reception attendance is recorded in the statutory registers in accordance with school requirements and applicable law.

In addition, the EYFS requires providers to follow up absences in a timely manner. Where a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period, the school will attempt to contact parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts, consider patterns and the child's and family's vulnerabilities, and follow safeguarding procedures. Concerns may be referred to children's social care and/or the police for a welfare check. The school's attendance expectations and absence-reporting procedures are shared with parents/carers.

16. Health, medicines and paediatric first aid

The school promotes children's good health, including oral health, and follows procedures for illness, infectious disease and infection prevention. Medicines are administered only in accordance with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions/Medicines procedures and EYFS requirements. Written parental permission is obtained for the particular medicine, administration is recorded, and parents/carers are informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

At least one person with a current full paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate that meets EYFS criteria is available on the premises at all times when Reception children are present and accompanies children on outings. Staffing and deployment take account of the number of children, the environment and the need for a trained first aider to respond quickly. PFA certificates are renewed every three years. Staff included in ratios meet any applicable PFA qualification requirements.

17. Food, drink, allergies and safer eating

Where the school provides Reception children with meals, snacks or drinks, these are healthy, balanced and nutritious, and the school has regard to the DfE Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance. Fresh drinking water is available and accessible throughout the day.

Before admission, the school obtains information about special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies, intolerances and relevant health needs. Information is kept up to date and shared with staff who need it. Individual allergy/medical action plans are developed with parents/carers and health professionals where appropriate. Staff understand allergy and anaphylaxis symptoms and emergency responses.

Children are adequately supervised while eating and are within sight and hearing of an adult. A member of staff with a valid full PFA certificate is in the room while children are eating. Food is prepared and served in a way that reduces choking risk, taking account of individual needs, and staff are clear about who is responsible for checking that each child receives suitable food and drink.

18. Intimate care and toileting

Children are supported sensitively to develop independence in toileting and personal care. Suitable hygienic changing arrangements are available where required. Children's dignity

and privacy are respected while being balanced with safeguarding and support needs. Staff follow the school's intimate care procedures and individual plans where these are required.

19. Behaviour, self-regulation and relationships

Behaviour is understood in the context of children's development, communication, needs and experiences. Adults model calm, respectful behaviour, teach routines and expectations explicitly, support emotional literacy and self-regulation, and help children resolve conflict. Corporal punishment is never used or threatened. Any physical intervention is used only where lawful and necessary to prevent immediate harm, and is recorded and reported in accordance with school procedures.

20. Screen use, online safety and digital technology

From 1 September 2026, the EYFS requires providers to have regard to DfE screen use guidance. In Reception, screen use is therefore limited, intentional, developmentally appropriate and clearly linked to a learning or access purpose. The DfE guidance advises that children aged 2–5 should have no more than one hour of screen time a day, less if possible; because children may already reach this limit at home, school use is kept short and purposeful.

Screens do not replace high-quality adult-child interaction, physical activity, outdoor learning, stories, play or social interaction. Passive viewing, background screens, routine use to occupy or calm children, and screen use during meals are avoided. Adults co-engage with children when screens are used and use talk, questioning and interaction to support learning. Screen-based assistive technology for children with SEND is considered according to individual need and is not subject to the same time limit.

The DfE screen use guidance advises avoiding children's use of artificial intelligence (AI), including toys with in-built AI features, until better evidence is available about its impact on young children. Reception pupils will not independently use generative AI tools. Any staff use of digital or AI tools must comply with school safeguarding, data protection, online safety and curriculum procedures and must not expose children's personal data or images to unapproved systems.

Images and videos of children are kept to the minimum necessary, captured only on approved devices and shared through secure school-approved systems. Personal devices are not used to photograph or record pupils. The school's safeguarding policy sets out rules for mobile phones, cameras and devices with imaging and sharing capability.

21. Information, records, confidentiality and data protection

The school maintains accurate and accessible records and shares relevant information with parents/carers, professionals, police, social care and other agencies where appropriate and lawful. Confidential records are held securely and accessed only by those with a right or professional need. Staff understand their responsibilities under data protection legislation and safeguarding information-sharing guidance. Safeguarding information is shared when necessary to protect a child; consent is not required where another lawful basis applies.

22. Partnership with parents and carers

Parents and carers are valued partners. The school provides clear information about the Reception curriculum, routines, staffing, attendance, safeguarding, reading and phonics, food/allergy arrangements and ways to support learning at home. Staff maintain regular two-way communication, share children's progress and respond promptly to concerns. Translation or other reasonable communication support is provided where needed to promote equitable access.

Parents/carers receive information about their child's EYFS Profile outcomes and annual report. Concerns or complaints are managed through the school's published Complaints Policy.

23. Transition into Reception and to Year 1

Transition into Reception is planned in partnership with families, pre-school settings and relevant professionals. Information is gathered and shared securely so that staff understand children's strengths, needs, interests, medical requirements, safeguarding information and SEND provision before or as they start. Additional transition arrangements are made for children who need them. See additional Transitions and starting School Policy.

Reception and Year 1 staff work together to secure a smooth transition to Key Stage 1. EYFS Profile information is transferred to Year 1 and staff discuss children's learning and development, including any reasonable adjustments, SEND provision and safeguarding information that must transfer. The Year 1 curriculum builds on what children know and can do; transition does not require Reception practice to become prematurely formal.

24. Monitoring, leadership and governance

The EYFS Lead monitors the quality of Reception curriculum, teaching, provision, assessment, inclusion and safeguarding practice, working with the headteacher, DSL, SENCO, subject leaders and governors. Monitoring is proportionate and focuses on children's experiences, learning, safety and outcomes rather than unnecessary paperwork.

The Governing Body and headteacher ensure that statutory EYFS requirements are met and that linked school policies collectively cover the required safeguarding and welfare procedures. This policy is reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or school circumstances change.

25. Linked school policies and procedures

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (including KCSIE procedures, allegations/low-level concerns and whistleblowing);
- Attendance Policy and Children Missing Education procedures;
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use / Mobile Phone and Camera procedures;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Medicines procedures;
- First Aid Policy;

- Health and Safety, Risk Assessment and Educational Visits procedures;
- Food/Allergy/Anaphylaxis procedures and school catering arrangements;
- Intimate Care Policy/procedures;
- Equality information and objectives / Accessibility Plan;
- Data Protection, Privacy and Records Management procedures; and
- Complaints Policy.
- Transitions and Starting School Policy
- Oracy and Vocabulary in Reception Policy
- Early Writing in Reception Policy.