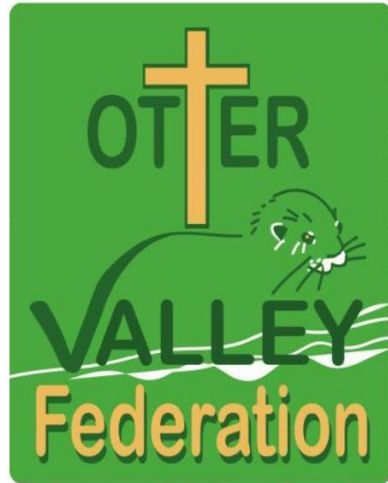


Believing and Achieving Together to be the Best We Can Be



***We aim to reflect God's love, "I have come that they
may have life, and have it to the full."
John 10:10***

EARLY YEARS AND FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

This Policy was adopted by:

The Governing Board of The Otter Valley Federation

And reviewed by the Curriculum Lead Portfolio Governor

Reviewed October 2025

Next triannual review: September 2028

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 for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025)

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

At Feniton C of E Primary School the children can join us in Foundation 1 (Little Explorers) during the term they turn three years old. Children join us in the Reception Class (Reception Rangers) at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. The EYFS Unit is led by a qualified teacher, who is assisted by a qualified Early Years Teacher; and Level 3, Level 2 and unqualified Foundation Stage Practitioners.

At Tipton St John C of E Primary School the children can join us in Pre-School (Squirrels) during the term they turn three years old. The Reception Children (Owls) start school at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. The Pre-School and Reception children are in the same unit which is led by a qualified teacher who is assisted by a Level 3 Foundation Stage Practitioner.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Government Statutory Framework for EYFS (updated September 2025):

[Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statutory-frameworks/early-years-foundation-stage)

And non-statutory curriculum guidance – Development Matters 2021

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf

Ethos

Our ethos reflects our Christian core values which we promote through all aspects of the school day, so that all pupils and staff can strive to be the best they can be and live life to the full. We believe every pupil is unique in the sight of God. We encourage children to develop their spirituality by helping them to recognise awe and wonder and celebrate creation.

Four overarching principles guide our practice (EYFS Framework 2025):

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- 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 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
- Children develop and learn at different rates

Curriculum Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage is the start of the pupil's school journey towards gaining the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude to achieving Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

Our intent is to ensure children who enter our EYFS develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and learning. This is to ensure the children have a solid foundation that they will continue to build upon.

The curriculum is designed with intent to:

- Provide a broad and balanced, sequenced programme of study that meets the needs of all the children, building upon what they know and can already do
- Enable all the children to make progress in their learning and achieve their full potential by providing opportunities to motivate and support children
- Protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children
- Support the acquisition of knowledge, vocabulary and effective communication by using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- Promote good behaviour
- Support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Prepare children for their next stage of education in Year 1

Curriculum Implementation

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are abler, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give the children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

For those children with special educational needs, the focus will be on removing barriers for children and on preventing learning difficulties developing. Children's learning difficulties will be identified at an early stage and teaching will respond quickly to areas of difficulty. This will involve working closely with parents and developing an effective strategy to meet these needs. Advice and guidance will be provided by the school SENDCO and an individual education plan (IEP) will be written. Outside agencies may become involved if necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the schools are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are embedded throughout the EYFS curriculum e.g. children are encouraged to value each other's views and recognise and talk about their feelings. Children are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds and are involved in activities that involve turn taking, sharing and collaboration.

Children are involved in creating class rules and understand they apply to everyone. They are encouraged to build resilience and responsibility. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against

children because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

To support the curriculum intent, all children will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating his/her understanding through seven areas of learning and development from the EYFS Framework. These include the prime areas (Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language; Physical Development) and the Specific areas (Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World; Expressive Arts). Children should mostly develop the **three prime areas** first and these underpin all the other areas of learning:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Communication and Language

Physical Development

As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in **four specific areas**:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding of the World

Expressive Arts and Design

In each area there are Developmental Matters statements and Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

The teaching of these areas of learning is practical and playful with support and challenge from adults in class sessions, small group sessions and working with individuals. There is a combination of adult-led sessions as well as child-initiated learning through continuous provision opportunities. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. All staff work together to foster the **characteristics of effective learning**:

- **Playing and exploring**
- **Active learning**
- **Creating and thinking critically**

How the Curriculum is Organised

The long term plan shows the organisation of the curriculum into themes with key texts. Cross curricular links are made to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Medium term planning shows learning objectives and a wide range of taught activities. Short-term plans show differentiation so the most able children are challenged and the less able are supported and can be adapted to link to children's interests. As rural schools we ensure we include topics to extend the children's awareness of cultural diversity and to celebrate our locality. Children's interest in reading is encouraged through daily stories and rhymes and in Reception class opportunities are provided for them to embed oral storytelling. Phonics is taught systematically and synthetically, so children have the opportunity to use sounds they have learnt both in their writing and reading.

In the summer term we invest time in preparing children for Year 1 through more structured play times with the rest of the school and planned time with their next class teacher.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

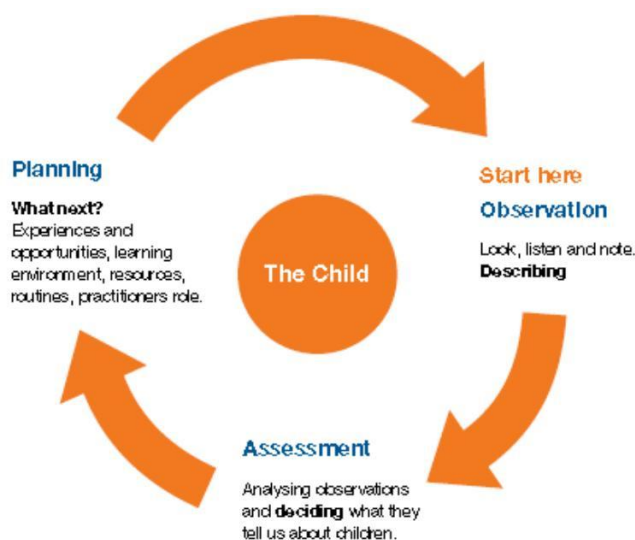
When pre-school and Reception children start, a baseline assessment is made through observations and interactions. Areas needing additional support for certain children are identified and appropriate activities for these 'notice and focus' children will be planned.

Assessment at the start of the Reception year includes the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts in Reception. At the end of the Reception year, the Early Years Foundation Profile (EYFSP) is completed for each child.

We use ongoing formative assessment to inform planning and support each child's progress across all areas of learning, with particular attention to the Prime Areas. Formative assessment may take the form of spontaneous observations, focused observations, photographs and discussions with children, parents and staff.

If there are concerns about a child's speech in pre-school, the Teddy Talk test is carried out and support provided to address any issues identified. In Reception class, any children identified with speech issues will be assessed by trained staff and a support programme is then implemented to address these issues.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is completed for each at the end of the EYFS. The profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with information about a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels (Early Learning Goals), and their readiness for year 1. For each ELG, practitioners must judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of the Reception year (expected) or not yet reaching this level (emerging).



The Role of all Adults in Developing Positive Relationships

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. Adults observe, interact and extend the children's activities to promote children's learning and a positive attitude to learning. This is through a mix of adult-directed and child-initiated activities, using both indoor and outdoor environments, to provide a positive context for learning and teaching.

We strive to develop children's communication skills in a language rich environment.

We know that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We aim to provide a range of opportunities to inform parents about children's learning experiences and progress which include:

- Visiting the setting and meeting staff before starting the setting.
- Parents' evenings held each term.
- Online 'learning journey' (Tapestry): which is always available to look at/ share with their child/ contribute to and includes weekly learning updates.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: class trips and Sports Days etc
- Regular newsletters.
- Ideas and resources to support home learning, provided on the school website.

Children of pre-school age have the opportunity to come to 'stay and play' sessions with their parents before they start in the preschool so they can see the setting and meet other children and adults. In the term preceding the beginning of Reception class, pre-school children are invited to transition mornings. Parents of children in Reception are invited to a meeting at the beginning of the year to discuss the curriculum, routines and to ask any questions. Ideas are shared for parents can support and help their child at home.

We operate an open-door policy where parents can talk with us at the beginning or preferably at the end of the school day, or they can telephone the school.

In pre-school at children are assigned a 'Key Person'. Their role is to help children settle in and ensure that learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. We believe that it is very important that parents and staff work closely together, as sharing our knowledge of the children will enable us to plan appropriate experiences and learning opportunities.

Where children attend more than one setting, we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children's achievements.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

All areas will be attractive and suitably resourced so that children are encouraged to use them and engage in purposeful, challenging activities with or without the presence of an adult.

Resources will be organised in such a way that children are enabled to make informed choices, select independently what they need and take responsibility for clearing away. Children will be able to relate personally to the resources provided so that they: reflect children's varied home and community experiences; reflect the culture of the local community and the wider world; avoid gender stereotyping.

The outdoor learning environment contributes to all areas of learning. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the chance to explore, use

their senses and be physically active and exuberant which has a positive effect on the children's development. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning. Resources outdoors and indoors are organised similarly to enable children to be independent and take responsibility for their learning.

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured and that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others so we use praise and encouragement, as well as stickers, certificates and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Curriculum Impact

By the end of Reception, the children will have developed physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally and have developed a positive attitude to school and learning. They will be ready to move up to Year 1.

By the end of Reception our children will use their knowledge of phonics to read accurately and with increasing speed and fluency.

There is an expectation that children will achieve well, particularly those children with lower starting points.

Welfare

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025. We understand that we are required to:

- safeguard children;
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children;
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

In accordance with the 2025 EYFS Framework, we also ensure that safeguarding policies are regularly reviewed and that staff are trained to identify and respond to signs of abuse or neglect, including online safety concerns.

In accordance with the 2025 EYFS Statutory Framework, meals, snacks and drinks provided are healthy, balanced and nutritious and have regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (May 2025). As stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (September 2025) we have a food and nutrition policy outlining our approach to healthy eating, allergy management, food safety, and cultural inclusivity. Only fresh drinking water and plain milk will be provided for children.

Staff will work closely with parents and health professionals to meet the individual needs of children with special dietary requirements.

Intimate care is given according to the OVF Intimate Care Policy. Children's privacy during nappy changing and toileting is considered and balanced with safeguarding considerations.

Health and Safety

The schools' guidelines on health, medical and safety issues are followed by the EYFS.

Children will only be dismissed to a parent or carer at the end of the day unless staff have been notified of any change. All children must be handed over personally to their parent/carer at the end of the day. No one under the age of 18 is allowed to collect a child in the EYFS.

At least one person who has a current Paediatric First Aid Certificate must be on the premises at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings. Whilst children are eating, they are supervised by someone who has a current Paediatric First Aid Certificate as stated in the Statutory Framework for EYFS (2025).

In the EYFS, we will continue to complete written risk assessments for any occasion that the children are leaving school premises.

First Aid

All injuries must be recorded in the accident record folder.

Parents must be informed, by telephone, of more serious injuries, especially bumped heads.

If a child has a minor injury and is well enough to remain in school, staff must inform their parent on collection at the end of the day either in person or by sending a letter home.

Continuing Professional Development

To keep up to date, broaden our understanding and learn new skills, all practitioners in the Otter Valley Federation receive regular training. The identification of training needs of all adults is part of an on-going process.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of all the adults in the EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Head of School and EYFS leader will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Confidentiality

All adults working in the EYFS must understand that all information in the course of employment will be kept confidential. Details of children, families and staff must remain confidential and must not be discussed outside of school.

Leadership and Management

Regular Local Learning Community EYFS meetings are held to discuss assessment and curriculum issues. Within school, regular discussions with the Head of School, monitor the progress of groups and individual pupils, EAL/SEND issues. Leadership teams ensure that all EYFS staff are supported through regular supervision and

professional development, as outlined in the 2025 Framework, to maintain high-quality provision and continuous improvement.

Priorities relating to the EYFS are identified in the Federation Development Plan.

Roles and responsibilities for all staff are reviewed in line with the Professional Growth Appraisal Cycle.

Procedures and staff training and development needs are outlined in the Federation Development Plan.

All staff and governors are aware of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the importance of this stage of development in relation to children's learning and its impact on raising standards across the school.

This policy reflects the updated EYFS Statutory Framework (effective from September 2025), ensuring compliance with the latest government guidance for group and school-based providers.