



DOGSTHORPE INFANT SCHOOL

EYFS Policy

Ratified by: Standards Committee

Date: 23rd March 2026

Minute: 10

Review Date: Every 2 years or if legislation changes

Welcome to our school family where children are...

-  inspired to dream and develop the building blocks to be independent, confident and inquisitive life-long learners.
-  nurtured, valued and individual differences are respected in an exciting, learning community where everyone belongs.
-  little stars who deserve to shine.

Policy Overview.

What is the policy for?	This policy is for staff and parents to support their knowledge and understanding of the EYFS Curriculum and Assessment.
Who has devised and contributed to this policy?	This policy is based on a HAT template which has been personalised for our school by the EYFS Learning and Teaching Manager, Headteacher and Governors.
How will this policy be communicated?	The policy is available on the school website, My Concern and a copy is available from the school office.
How will this policy be monitored?	This will be monitored by the SLT and Governors.
Which other policies are linked to this policy?	Curriculum Assessment All Safeguarding policies

1. Rationale

“Every child deserves the best possible start to life and support to achieve their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

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

This policy aligns with statutory requirements for learning, development and care for children including safeguarding, welfare, safer recruitment, assessment and staffing as outlined in the “EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers” (effective from 1 September 2025).

2. Principles of the EYFS

At Dogsthorpe Infant School we strive to meet every child’s entitlement to develop a love of learning that will enable them to have the best future life chances.

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2025) states 4 overarching principles to the early education that should shape practice in the Early Years. These are:

- 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**. They benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- 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, promoting a commitment to continuous provision both indoors and out;
- Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates with practitioners ensuring that early years experiences contribute positively to children’s brain development and readiness for KS1. Learning and development requirements also reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge and attitudes children need as foundations for life now and in the future.

3. The Early Years Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly important for learning

and forming relationships, they build a foundation for children to thrive and provide a basis for learning in all areas.

These three areas, the *prime* areas, are:

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

Providers must also support children in four *specific* areas, which help strengthen and develop the three prime areas and ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm.

The *specific* areas are:

- **Literacy;**
- **Mathematics;**
- **Understanding the world; and**
- **Expressive arts and design.**

Our Curriculum is established on the principles of promoting a deep love for learning that develops young people as leaders and innovators in their own right. We are ambitious for **all** children, whilst considering the individual needs, interests and development of each child. We recognise that each cohort is individual and, practitioners work with their knowledge of the children's starting points and desired end goals to create a personalised curriculum. We deliver a child-centred approach to learning that is both challenging and enjoyable, providing experiences in all areas of learning and development. Skilled adults provide relevant, suitable resources and experiences to support this.

Our curriculum is strongly aligned to knowledge of the children. Throughout the EYFS setting there is a high emphasis on the development of the prime areas of learning, thus ensuring that children have strong foundations for future life and learning. Developing children's self-confidence and executive functioning is key in developing respected members of the community who can strive and thrive. Our curriculum is developed to ensure that children feel a sense of self and self-worth, ensuring that fundamental British Values are promoted across the setting. It strives to ensure that children can live together peacefully, with each of them playing a pivotal role in the diverse world in which we live.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In planning and guiding what children learn, we reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust our practice appropriately. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play and learning that is a balance of adult-led, adult-guided and child-initiated activities, committing to the

Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- 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 achievements
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

These characteristics of effective learning allow practitioners to discuss children’s preferred play behaviours and learning styles, along with offering an insight into the depth of the child’s learning at that particular moment in time.

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. We believe that through play and continuous provision our children are able to make sense of the world in which they live. They practise, discuss and construct ideas, developing as independent thinkers, and they learn how to interact, disagree, and support (with) others, taking responsibility of their own actions and choices.

The Enabling Environment

The environmental design and layout of the learning environment is instrumental for effective EYFS provision. Our children should be able to move freely, (both indoors and out), independently and purposefully around the environment to demonstrate the skills they possess. They have access to a range of resources that will support their development and play. We consider our practitioners to be a fundamental part of our environment, as such we have developed our knowledge of child development, learning theories and interaction styles. Our environment is full of open-ended resources with the aim to develop children’s imagination and self-confidence to play in a world they have truly made. Adults interact skillfully and flexibly to ensure they enhance rather than inhibit the children’s play. Our environment is set up to promote communication, between peers and children and adults. By providing children with communication friendly spaces, we are able to ensure they have the fundamental tools for learning, developing their vocabulary, expressing themselves and communicating their ideas effectively. We strongly encourage a daily balance of child-initiated activities with adult-led tasks, and independent tasks and adapt our provision accordingly.

- **Continuous Provision** - Children will be able to independently access a range of play based resources that are both developmentally appropriate and challenging. This provision changes throughout the year in line with each cohort’s needs, but ultimately stays very similar, offering children the safety of knowing what to expect when they come to school along with being able to build on previous learning.

- **Enhanced Provision** - Children will access play provocations that have been set up by an adult and that are supportive of the overarching topic. This enables key workers to consolidate and extend children's abilities in all areas of the curriculum. An adult may guide the children to follow certain paths, however, children are able to use the resources as they wish in their play. Enhanced activities will be based upon the observations and assessments that have been carried out of the pupils.

Staff take into account the individual needs, progress interests and development of each child in their care, addressing any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers and any relevant professionals. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

We ensure that children with English as an additional language have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language, ensuring they are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin KS1. We may explore a child's skills in their home language with parents/ carers where a concern for language delay is considered.

Staff are responsible for supporting, understanding and managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way in line with our stringent behaviour curriculum and policy. The whole school curriculum supports our enabling environment and well-being for all children.

Observation, Planning and Assessment

Children are experts in purposeful play and we believe in providing resources that encourage children to explore, investigate and hypothesise by giving them ideas to ponder and develop. As they play, they are deeply involved in learning about the mechanics of how things work and become thoroughly engaged in autonomous play, constantly developing their prime areas of learning with their engagement and attention. This enables all children to be accessing the resources and curriculum in a developmentally appropriate manner to their individual needs, working with one another whilst pushing their own boundaries. We watch children develop, recognise their progress, understand their needs and plan activities and support, putting in place opportunities to nurture them to grow into shining stars. As the adults observe, they skilfully interact, ask questions to consolidate, scaffold and extend the learning that is taking place. This allows adults to make informed judgements about the children's knowledge, understanding and the acquisition of their skills.

Observation

At Dogsthorpe Infant School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. We reflect on what children know and can do, and use

this knowledge to shape teaching and learning. We continuously observe children through a variety of techniques such as:

- Distance observation
- Interacting with
- Playing alongside
- Short annotations
- Photos
- Videos
- Audios

We use an online observation platform called SeeSaw. This platform enables the adults to record children's learning to ensure we capture key experiences in a variety of ways.

These observation methods enable us to identify:

- The children's well-being and involvement,
- The development stage they are working at, closely linked to our 'Steps to Success'
- The child's interests,
- The possible next steps that we need to plan for,
- Any possible gaps in learning that we need to focus on

Planning

Practitioners have been involved in rigorous CPD to develop their understanding of child development and how this relates to end points of our curriculum. We then use the children's starting points, areas of strength and development and interests to plan engaging and motivating sessions. The current Early Years Foundation Stage and Developmental Matters (DfE) are used to identify next steps for children, to deepen and extend their knowledge and understanding. We use our excellent knowledge of children's interests in order to design an effective early years curriculum that will change according to the cohort we have. During planning sessions, discussions take place to ensure activities allow for characteristics of effective learning to be demonstrated and embedded.

We immerse children in high quality texts and language throughout the year, introducing "Pathways to Write" as age- appropriate, stimulating texts to support children with developing their writing. Maths and Phonics inputs are taught daily following 'NCETM' Maths, supported by White Rose sessions, and our 'Monster Phonics' scheme. The delivery of these sessions is adapted to meet the needs of the cohort.

Our careful planning structure allows opportunities for "overlearning" to take place so that children can revisit, contemplate, consider and voice new ideas and concepts with confidence.

Assessment and Reporting

As well as observations which enable us to assess where the children are at developmentally on a daily basis, we also make regular assessments of the children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

- Ongoing assessment - (formative) is an integral part of the learning and development process. Each day we carry out "in the moment" assessments of the children. This enables provision to be altered and reshaped in real time. These discussions often bring about changes in focus, vocabulary, areas for development and individual needs.
- The Government Statutory Baseline Assessment (RBA) - Within the first 6 weeks of school life we carry out an initial digital assessment of each child. This will be used as a baseline from which to calculate progress.
- Baseline Assessment - within the first six weeks of school life we carry out an initial assessment of each child, using our knowledge of child development (practitioners have access to Development Matters, Birth to 5 Matters and checkpoints for each area of learning) and the end Early Learning Goals of reception, to assess whether children are on track to reach the expected level of each ELG. Practitioners will reflect on whether or not the provision being offered is suitable and highlight priorities for the next term. This assessment also informs us of the emotional needs as well as academic attainment at point of entry for each cohort. This information will be analysed within the EYFS team and shared with SLT.
- Formative assessment throughout the year - practitioners track children's progress formally at the end of each half term, recording on the school's data system (Sonar) the progress made towards the ELG in all 7 areas of the curriculum.
- End of Year Assessment - At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for **all** children, providing a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities and their attainment against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1. Pupils are assessed against the prime and specific early learning goals, indicating whether they are:
Meeting expected levels of development
Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')
- Moderation and agreement trailing - professional discussions take place between practitioners both in-house, cross-school and within the Trust. The levels of children in certain areas of learning, including work samples and judgements are analysed to ensure a consistent approach to learning standards. Practitioners have reference to the DfE Exemplification materials.

Parent Consultations – Parents are formally invited to discuss their child's progress and development twice a year- one via an online appointment and one invited into

school. Any learning and development needs are addressed in partnership with parents/carers. Where appropriate, parents are invited to attend Book Buzz reading sessions, P2L parent & child sessions and information workshops to help support their child further.

- End of Year Report - all parents will receive a formal written report at the end of the year detailing the achievements of their child.
- A Seesaw Learning Journal is created for each child and collates a comprehensive view of a child's development across all areas of the EYFS curriculum. The learning journey of each child contributes towards assessment data and analysis.
- Transition meetings with Year 1 teachers are held to discuss individual children's stage of development and learning needs going into Year 1. EYFS profiles are discussed during this meeting.

Transitions into Reception

At Dogsthorpe Infant School, we pride ourselves on our extensive transition programme. We recognise that the more informed we are about our children the better placed we are to provide a purposeful curriculum, with a team of adults who are best placed to support. We take starting school very seriously and offer a range of activities to support with this transition, including:

- Information sharing sessions with preschool/nursery staff
- Preschool/nursery/home visits when possible
- Prospective Parents information evening
- Daytime tours of school
- Stay and Play sessions in July
- Home Visits in the first week of September
- Induction timetables in September

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

At Dogsthorpe Infant School, we follow the statutory safeguarding requirements in Section 3 of the 'EYFS Framework' (2025), which have been updated and strengthened in the most recent version of the Framework. These key safeguarding updates include:

- **Safer Recruitment** - We provide references, and will obtain **references**, for all appointments. We follow strengthened safer-recruitment procedures to help ensure that only suitable individuals are recruited. We include these in our safeguarding policy.

- **Attendance Monitoring** - We regularly monitor the attendance of our children in the reception year, as we do with all children, including following up when a child is absent on each day of absence. We follow up where a child is absent for a prolonged period of time. We ensure that we hold additional emergency contact details.
- **Safer Eating guidance** - We follow the updated guidance regarding preparation of snacks and supervision of the children whilst they are eating. Food is prepared in a way to prevent choking. Any information regarding special dietary requirements, food allergies and intolerances is sought before children start at school. Children remain within sight and hearing of staff whilst eating. Where possible staff sit facing children whilst they eat, to help prevent choking and unexpected allergic reactions.
- **Paediatric First Aid (PFA)** - There is always a member of staff, with a full paediatric first aid qualification, available to our reception children.
- **Whistleblowing** - These procedures are included in staff induction and annual safeguarding training. Further information is available in our Whistleblowing Policy.
- **Privacy during Toileting and Nappy Changing** - We have a separate Intimate Care Policy which has been updated to ensure that children's privacy and dignity is always +considered and balanced with safeguarding considerations.
- A safeguarding training criteria annex is inclusive of safeguarding policies and includes how safeguarding is delivered, including how practitioners are supported to put it into place.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.