Children First Learning Partnership
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy
September 2025

The EYFS Policy in respect of the Reginald Mitchell Primary School has been discussed and adopted by the Local Advisory Board in September 2025
Chair of Board: *Mr J King*
Responsible *Executive Headteacher – Mrs L Jukes*
Agreed and ratified by the Local Advisory Board on: September 2025
To be reviewed: September 2028

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Health & Safety Policy and our Safeguarding policy Policies – Reginald Mitchell Primary School | Staffordshire

The overall intent of our school curriculum is to:

Recognise uniqueness: in our pupils, staff, resources and whole school community.

Be Inclusive: recognising learning styles, learning needs at all levels and providing solutions to any barriers to learning we encounter.

Engage and Inspire: Through knowledge rich, highly enriched, progressive and purposeful contexts.

Promote Aspiration: offering challenge, accountability and responsibility for their learning.

Create citizens of the Future: who thrive on responsibility, see difference as a strength of our community and use democracy to embed their own values and beliefs.

Our EYFS curriculum strives to drive all of these intentions and links very closely to the achievement and development of them all.

Intent

Through our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), we intend to provide children with the best possible start to their school life, providing the foundations upon which their education can be built to enable them to fulfil their potential. We

Our Aims:

- To develop a positive attitude and a deep love of learning.
- To provide a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment where all children feel valued.
- To nurture the children's imagination, language, and curiosity.
- To encourage independence, self-motivation, and confidence.
- To provide children with early reading, writing and maths skills through purposeful teaching and provision.
- To bring learning opportunities to life with enriched, real, and purposeful opportunities through play.
- To build relationships within the local community, and experience cultures around the wider world.
- To work together in partnership with parents and carers, valuing the role that they play.
- To ensure all children make excellent progress in their learning and reach their full potential.

Implementation

Curriculum

Our EYFS curriculum has been thoughtfully designed to suit the needs of our children, providing them with a wide variety of opportunities and experiences to learn through play. The curriculum has been split into half termly topics to engage children, building upon prior experiences and expose them to new.

The EYFS curriculum is based upon four guiding principles: -

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

The Nursery and Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available at:

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

The EYFS framework 2025 (EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers)

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development all of which are important and inter connected. (DfE: 2021:1.3.)

Prime areas are fundamental, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas.

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

Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

• Literacy

• Mathematics

• Understanding the World

• Expressive Arts and Design

Through our curriculum, each of these areas of learning are explicitly planned for throughout each of the half termly topics.

To support and develop children's learning across the curriculum, continuous provision, and enhancements to this are carefully planned out to ensure that provision meets the needs of the children and feeds into their natural curiosity and inquisitiveness, encouraging children to ask questions and explore independently.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The EYFS also includes the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These are regularly observed, planned for, and implemented across our EYFS curriculum.

The three characteristics are:

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep 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.

We engage children in **playing and exploring** using open-ended resources and encouraging children to think of ideas for play themselves. Promoting and planning for role-play enables our children to re-enact situations, activities, and conversations to make sense of the world and we also provide a secure and safe environment for children to take risks.

To ensure our children are **creative and think critically** we provide them with opportunities for child-initiated play allowing children to take play and learning in their own direction. Staff work alongside the child and use open ended questions to develop problem-solving, sharing their ideas and thinking. Children are encouraged to make links and talk through their learning process.

To encourage **active learning** the timetable has been carefully planned to give children time to become deeply involved in their play and give them the opportunity to find a solution to their problems. Staff offer children praise when they reach a goal and lots of encouragement when they need to persevere with something.

When children display these aspects, their success is noticed by adults and is celebrated and rewarded within their online learning journeys, weekly 'Characteristic Champion' certificates and an interactive celebratory display that is updated termly.

Teaching Strategies

Adults are actively involved in children's learning throughout the day. This may be in the form of adult-led sessions or as an active facilitator to children's play; challenging and questioning children to embed and extend their learning. We believe that during child led activities the adults' role and interaction with the children is essential to build the children's understanding and guide new learning.

Within the enabling environment, staff ensure that children are given the opportunity to put their new skills into practice on their own and have a go for themselves. Their confidence and independence grow through opportunities to try new things, test ideas and make choices through a safe and supportive environment. We firmly believe that one of the most powerful things we can teach our children is to become independent learners.

Early Reading and Phonics

At Reginald Mitchell Primary School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. At Reginald Mitchell Primary school it is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background and that it promotes and fosters a life-long love of reading from the very beginning of their school journey.

We start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

Foundations for phonics in Nursery

We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for 'Communication and language' and 'Literacy'. These include:

- sharing high-quality stories and poems
- learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
- activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
- attention to high-quality language.

We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

In nursery we expose the children to GPCs through a sound a week approach and modelling when necessary. This is to support the Literacy 3-4 years objectives in the EYFS development matters document.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception

- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day as a whole class. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week's teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.
- We follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* expectations of progress:
    - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week-Reception

- We teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:
    - are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children
    - use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids on pages 11–20 of 'Application of phonics to reading'

- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.

- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
  - decoding
  - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
  - comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.
- In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.

Home reading

- The reception decodable reading practice book is taken home weekly to ensure success is shared with the family.
- Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children weekly. Nursery parents/carers are expected to share this book with their child at least once over the course of the week, noting this in their child's home/school reading diary. More able children in Nursery receive a phonetically plausible book alongside a phonics pack in the summer term if they are ready.
- Reception pupils will receive a weekly Evidence Me post sharing the learning that has taken place during the reading sessions. The sounds, words and the main teaching focus will be explained in these weekly posts.
- We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* parents' resources to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

To celebrate and foster a love of reading, children receive certificates for reading known as 'Rainbow Readers.' These certificates are celebrated in assembly and shared with parents/carers.

For further information on early reading and phonics in EYFS, please see the Early Reading and Phonics policy on our school website.

Learning through Play

Learning through play is an important and integral part of the Early Years curriculum and classroom. We believe that children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own developing the characteristics of learning.

The Acquisition of Early Language

We believe that the importance of planning for and providing opportunities, time and space for children to talk, listen and understand is paramount. Through careful planning we have created a broad and rich language environment. We ensure the use of talk partners and that time is given to discussion and the sharing of children's ideas.

Children are exposed to read aloud sessions daily and back and fourth conversations about stories is encourages. Adults facilitate role-play and small word play to extend children's language and provide opportunities for conversation. Vocabulary linked to topic and key texts is promoted by adults and these 'wow words' are displayed on working walls. Some vocabulary is taught explicitly through adult led sessions and then within child-initiated learning. Adults skilfully interact with children to model, scaffold language, and ensure the use of open-ended questioning and commenting to promote discussion. By developing pupils speaking and listening skills, we enable them to access more areas of learning and communicate with adults and other children.

Classroom Organisation

Our Early Years indoor and outdoor environment are organised and accessible for all children through clearly defined areas that children are encouraged to access independently and safely. Opportunities for outdoor learning are valued and exploited. Being outdoors provides children with more freedom to learn and the ability to take risks, to explore and to become independent. Where possible Forest School sessions are planned to further learning from within the classroom. Our classrooms have been designed with clearly defined areas of provision including reading, writing, maths, role-play, creative, investigation and physical opportunities. A rich set of resources, offering a wide variety of possibilities, are organised using easily accessible open shelving to promote children's independence and enable open-ended learning. Risk assessments are carried out frequently to ensure our learning environments are safe and secure.

Welfare Requirements

At Reginald Mitchell Primary School, the welfare of every child is paramount. In line with the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework and our safeguarding responsibilities, we are committed to creating a secure, inclusive, and nurturing environment where children can thrive physically, emotionally, and socially.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

- All staff receive regular safeguarding training and are familiar with the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are clearly identified and accessible to staff, children, and families. Further information on our Safeguarding leads can be found on our school website Safeguarding – Reginald Mitchell Primary School | Staffordshire
- Concerns about a child's welfare are acted upon swiftly and in accordance with statutory guidance and school procedures.
- We promote a culture of vigilance, where children's voices are heard and respected.

Health and Safety

- The EYFS environment is risk assessed daily to ensure it remains safe, clean, and suitable for learning and play.
- Children are taught to manage risks through supervised exploration and age-appropriate challenges.
- Staff are trained in paediatric first aid and respond promptly to any incidents or injuries.

Suitable People

- All adults working with children in EYFS undergo enhanced DBS checks and rigorous recruitment procedures.
- Staff are supported through ongoing professional development to maintain high standards of care and education.
- Ratios are maintained in accordance with statutory EYFS guidance, ensuring that children always receive appropriate supervision and support to promote safety, engagement, and high-quality learning experiences.

Premises and Equipment

- Our indoor and outdoor learning spaces are designed to be accessible, stimulating, and safe.
- Resources are age-appropriate, well-maintained, and support children's development across all areas of learning.

Medicines and Health

- We follow clear procedures for administering medication, with parental consent and accurate record-keeping.
- All medications are signed in out and daily and stored in the school office apart from inhalers which are kept within classrooms.
- Children with medical needs are supported through individual care plans developed in partnership with families and health professionals.

Behaviour and Emotional Wellbeing

- Positive behaviour is promoted through consistent routines, clear expectations, and nurturing relationships.
- Staff model respectful interactions and support children in developing self-regulation and empathy.
- Emotional wellbeing is prioritised through initiatives such 'Characteristic Champions' which celebrate resilience, enthusiasm, and risk-taking.

Equality and Inclusion

- We actively challenge discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all children.
- Provision is adapted to meet individual needs, ensuring every child feels valued and included.

Intimate care

Intimate care is delivered with dignity, sensitivity, and respect for the child's privacy. It encompasses support with personal hygiene, toileting, and changing, and is carried out in a way that promotes each child's independence and emotional security.

- Toileting routines are handled discreetly and supportively, with staff responding to individual needs and developmental stages.
- Children are encouraged to develop self-care skills, with gentle guidance and reassurance.
- Procedures are carried out by known and trusted adults, following agreed protocols and with parental consent.
- Staff follow hygiene best practices, including the use of appropriate protective equipment and thorough handwashing.
- Facilities are clean, age-appropriate, and accessible, ensuring children feel safe and confident.
- Any concerns arising during intimate care are recorded and reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

<u>Safe Eating</u>

- Mealtimes are calm, social experiences that support children's independence and wellbeing.
- Staff are trained to supervise eating safely, including awareness of allergies, choking risks, and dietary needs.
- Within our Early Years curriculum pupils are taught how to eat safely and correctly.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods in a supportive environment, with respect for cultural and individual preferences.
- All food provided meets nutritional standards and is prepared in accordance with food hygiene regulations.
- Pupils with allergies are recorded on our school system, Arbor and within class folders to ensure all staff are aware of known allergies.

Parents as Partners

We value the role that parents, and carers play in the life of their child. We look for opportunities to work with families to support learning at home and to involve parents/carers in their child's school life. We therefore make it our aim to work very closely with parents. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the families of the children in our care. We do this through:

- Providing parents with a handbook of information about our EYFS settings and school readiness information.
- Meeting with parents before their children start school at induction meetings and visits to the classrooms with their children.
- Inviting parents to attend informal workshops about the curriculum, such a phonics, reading, maths.
- Holding and inviting parents to 1:1 meetings to talk about how their child has settled into the school environment and to talk about their child's progress twice a year.

- Sending written reports home about children's attainment and progress three times a year.
- Sending home observations of the children's learning via the Evidence me App.
- Publishing curriculum topic information on school website.
- Operating weekly drop-in sessions.
- Regular contact through texts and newsletters via Arbor.
- Offering a range of activities throughout the school year – assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports days.
- Encouraging parents to be classroom helpers as volunteers.

Induction

It is important to us that you and your child feel happy, comfortable and safe when you join our school family whether it be for Nursery or Reception.

We have developed a robust Induction Programme for our new Nursery & Reception children. It is designed to ensure that both our children and our parents are familiar and comfortable with both the school and the staff before your child even begins school. This means that when your child officially joins our school family they can settle quickly and feel happy in their new school environment.

Details of our Induction Programme

During the Summer Term, prior to starting school the following September, there are several parts of Induction that take place. These are detailed below:

- Parents are invited to attend an 'Welcome to Meeting' at school to meet the EYFS leader and the teaching staff.
- Foundation Stage staff visit or telephone pre-school settings to meet the children and their Key Workers.
- Children and parents are invited to 'Stay and Play' times in school.
- Our induction policy is flexible and therefore we can adapt our policy if needed to meet the needs of the children and families.

In September, the children have a swift introduction to school. All children start in Reception full time. If needed this can be adapted to suit individual needs. It is important to say that if you have any questions, queries, or concerns at any point you are most welcome to contact school.

Transition

We have several transitions throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage that we manage with care. Transitions are times within your child's school journey when they move within our school to their next year group.

The first transition that occurs during Early Years is the transition from Nursery to Reception and we aim to ensure that transition is as smooth and comfortable as possible. In order to do this, parents are invited to a 'Welcome to Reception' meeting

during the summer term to provide information about the school, the curriculum, teaching staff and the day-to-day life in Reception. There is also the opportunity to talk about other general information, such as school dinners, uniform and any questions or queries. It is also an opportunity to meet the child's new class teacher and members of the EYFS team.

The children's transition takes place in the whole school transition week in July. During this week all children move into their new Reception class to familiarise themselves with their new classrooms and staff. Early Years staff will also meet in the summer term to share information about each child's development and any key information about each child (e.g., medical, SEN, EAL, etc.).

The second transition is that from Reception to Year 1. During this transition, the children attend transition days as part of the whole school transition week in July. During these days, the children may begin their new topic, complete exciting artwork & displays and spend more time with their new classroom staff to familiarise themselves. Reception teachers continue to support Year 1 for the first Autumn term to ensure a smooth transition, adapting the timetable and classroom environment to suit the needs of the children as they move from the Early Years curriculum to the National curriculum.

Impact

Observations, Assessment and Learning Journeys

On entry to Nursery or Reception the teacher carries out a baseline assessment, these assessments allow us to identify the child's attainment, their important next steps in learning, and any significant barriers to learning. The curriculum is then tailored accordingly for each individual child. As a team, we discuss each child regularly throughout the academic year and reinforce our judgements using the Evidence Me assessment tracking system.

Children in Reception also complete the Reception Baseline (RBA) with a familiar adult, within the first few weeks of starting, in line with Government expectations.

At the end of Reception each child is assessed against each of the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG). They are assessed as either emerging, expected, or exceeding the ELG for each of the 17 areas of learning and a report is given to parents informing them about their child's learning and progress in each of the areas of learning. This information is also given to the Year 1 teachers to aide transition.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects children's identified needs. Through the regular monitoring of children's progress, we can initiate early action and support. We work closely with parents, carers, and external agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make progress.

Children who are working below age related expectation receive regular intervention. Following our EYFS Intervention Pathway staff deliver interventions in small groups or 1:1 within the enabling environment as a minimum of three times per week. Interventions include Physical, fine and gross motor, PSED emotional or social skills,

Literacy and Maths. Speaking and listening activities are delivered 1:1 within a quiet space. Interventions are reviewed every half term to measure impact and progress.

Assessment in the EYFS primarily takes the form of observations, this involves practitioners observing and questioning children to identify their achievements, interests, and next steps for learning. Evidence collection is kept to the minimum required and is used to aide professional discussion or quality assure judgements. This evidence may include images, videos, and observations. This happens throughout the day when children are embedding and extending any previous learning. Observations and assessments are recorded using an online assessment tool, Evidence Me.

As well as an electronic learning journey each child has their own writing journal to evidence and celebrate writing achievements. We are then able to share these experiences with the children's parents sending each child's observation home electronically through Evidence Me and sharing writing journals at parents' evenings. Parents are also informed of their child's progress through termly reports and parents' evenings.

Moderation

In-school moderation takes place termly. Judgements and evidence from all staff for children from both Nursery and Reception are discussed as a team. Evidence is quality assured and standardised across the unit with a focus on a range of Prime and Specific areas over the year. Inter-school moderation will also take place between the Children First Learning Partnership schools twice per year.

Role of the EYFS Lead

Our EYFS lead is committed to raising standards and ensuring each child has the best start on the school journey. We aim to:

- Plan an effective and varied schedule of monitoring so that we know the Quality of Education within Early Years is effectively implemented and embedded.
- Respond quickly and supportively to all barriers preventing outstanding implementation and impact.
- Use monitoring and assessment information to provide effective CPD and challenge.
- Provide clear updates to the Local Advisory Board, Headteacher and SLT.

Version	Review Date	Changes Made
V2	16.01.2022	Characteristics of Learning- updated in line with EYFS reforms 2021
V3	16.01.2022	Early Reading & Phonics – Nursery and Reception procedures for reading added.
V4	16.01.2022	Observation & Assessment- RBA procedures added, Evidence Me online assessment tool and writing journals.

V5	22.09.2025	Impact- assessment, intervention and role of the leader added.
V6	22.09.2025	Pages 7-9 Included welfare requirement sections to align with updated KCSIE 2025/EYFS Framework 2025 P3 Included a link to the new EYFS Framework 2025