



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy September 2025-2026

Background

This policy has been written with reference to the documents:

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage Published: 14th July 2025, Effective: 1st September 2025.

Development Matters Non-Statutory Curriculum Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, First published September 2021, Revised September 2023.

Birth to Five Matters Non-Statutory Curriculum Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

Strong Foundations in the First Years of School, (2024)

Governor Statement

The Governors of Newdale Primary School have agreed the following policy for Early Years.

Reviewed September 25-26

Review Date: September 2026

“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.

“Research is clear that high-quality early education establishes the foundations for later success, including academic achievement, good health and well-being.”

Strong foundations in the First Years of School 2024.

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

We recognise that every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; We use praise and encouragement, as well as celebrating success, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

The EYFS is based upon three characteristics of effective learning which practitioners must reflect upon and adjust their practice accordingly:

1. **Playing and exploring** – Children investigate and experience things and 'have a go.'
2. **Active learning** – Children concentrate and keep on going if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** – Children develop and have their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

There are seven main areas of learning and development in the EYFS. All areas are important and interconnected.

The **Three prime areas** of learning are:

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

Additionally, there are **Four specific areas** of learning, in which the prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

The Learning Environment

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by adult observation of the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The EYFS classroom is 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 both inside and out is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources. We encourage the children to become independent in choosing and using their own equipment and resources for play and in developing their own learning. There is a gradual build-up of autonomy which aims to help children grow up into adults who are able to take care of themselves. The children have access to outdoor learning throughout the day. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Activities and resources are provided for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Teaching and Learning Style

The school's teaching and learning policy defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school (see Teaching and Learning policy).

Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. They internalize and rehearse new knowledge and skills that have been taught. Play with peers is important for children's development.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice 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. They express fears or re-live experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Strong foundations in the First Years of School 2024 recommends:

- “interacting with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities
- communicating and modelling language
- showing, explaining and exploring ideas
- encouraging, questioning, recalling and providing a narrative for what children are doing
- setting challenges and helping children to achieve them
- paying attention to the physical environment and resources, as well as the daily structures and routines that establish expectations

Both [play-based learning](#) and direct instruction have value for teaching young children, but considering which is better suited to a particular form of knowledge is crucial. It is also important to think about how best children can learn what is intended.”

As a result of this, we plan for a range of play opportunities for our children including:

- Adult directed – where an adult teaches new key knowledge and skill that is built upon sequentially, and describes what a child is expected to do to ensure focused learning in a particular area.
- Child initiated – where children plan, carry out and evaluate their play. We refer to this as ‘Challenge Time’ to encourage children to see positivity in challenging themselves and developing their own ideas. Children have the opportunity to apply the knowledge that they have acquired.
- Child led/independent learning – where children choose from a group of activities but develop the play themselves. They apply acquired knowledge and skills. Adults will have carefully planned and selected activities to enhance the learning that has taken place.

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS follows a bespoke curriculum, developed from a combination of key objectives taken from the government documents ‘Development Matters, Non-Statutory Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023’ and ‘Birth to Five Matters, Non-Statutory Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021’.

This guidance is used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for sequential long term and weekly planning. The planning is based on the assessed needs of the children, building on their prior knowledge, and next steps in learning. The EYFS curriculum at Newdale has been specifically designed to dovetail into the Year 1 National Curriculum.

“Building fluency in foundational knowledge allows children to succeed and therefore grow in confidence.”

Strong foundations in the First Years of School 2024

Regular assessments of children’s learning are made; this information is used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children’s learning journey folders or stored digitally as part of the child’s individual digital learning journey profile.

We track the progress of the children across EYFS to surmise whether they are working at expected age, below or above expected age. This is updated termly and discussed in pupil progress meetings with members of the Senior Management Team and the Assessment Coordinator. In the final term of the EYFS children are assessed as to whether they have

attained a 'Good Level of Development' in which they have achieved age related expected level across all areas. This profile is reported to the local authority and a written summary is given to parents, reporting their child's progress. Data is analysed to look for patterns and trends. This information informs the School Development Plan. Information is also shared with the children's Year 1 teachers to help ensure a smooth transition into the National Curriculum.

Baseline assessment

Our approach to baseline assessment ensures that we get an accurate picture of each child. On entry to Foundation Stage, children are assessed using the Government's Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The assessment is carried out by the class teacher or equivalent familiar adult, during the first 6 weeks of starting school. The assessment will be used as a baseline for measuring the progress primary schools make with their pupils. It will be a practitioner-led, activity-based assessment of children's early literacy, communication and language and early mathematics skills. Children who attend Newdale Nursery have their assessments passed on to the receiving Reception teachers.

Parents as Partners

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution that parents make. Children's well-being is best fostered when parents and educators combine their knowledge of the child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children.

The partnership is achieved by providing opportunities by:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts school and nursery. Home visits or telephone calls are carried out in the Summer Term before children start school. The Class teacher talks to the parent about their child and answers any questions they may have.
- Inviting children to spend time with their teacher and key person in nursery prior to starting school/nursery during our "Induction Sessions".
- Parents are invited to attend an EYFS induction where the Head Teacher and Foundation stage teachers explain the curriculum.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher/key person about any concerns they may have.
- Shortly after starting school parents of children in Nursery and Reception are invited to discuss progress in private with the teacher/key person and review their child's work.
- Parents receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the academic year.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents. For example, fund raising days, themed activity days, Christmas celebration, sports day, to which all family members are invited, and Stay and play.
- Home/school communication books are used to provide a link between home and the setting. Ideas on how parents can help their child at home are shared in the book.
- Wow moments and Home stories are sent home and kept in school and nursery for parents to access. These are slips in which parents can fill details of any particular achievements of their child at home, which in turn gives knowledge to the teacher for assessments that can be shared and celebrated.
- Evidence Me is an online platform in which observations of the child's learning is shared with the Parents through the 'Parent Share' option. Parents are also encouraged to use the facilities to upload their own experiences at home with their child. These are then responded to by the child's class teacher and objectives that the observation may

evidence are also added. These 'Parent Shares' form part of the child's Learning Journey profiles.

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. At our school the class teacher acts as a 'Key Person' to all children within the EYFS, and is supported by Teaching Assistants or key worker assistants.

Reception classes have excellent links with our Nursery and work closely together. The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss the new intake of children prior to them starting school. These visits provide the opportunity to discuss individual needs and to meet the children within the pre-school environment.

Inclusion

Another aim of the home/school partnership approach is to enable early accurate identification of the child's potential need for support in some areas of growth, development or learning, and to collaborate with parents to create a common strategy for supporting the child. 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.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We provide every child the opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

"When children join Reception, what they already know differs greatly. Some will need additional teaching.^[footnote 13] They will need opportunities to develop their language and communication, to learn what their peers already know.^[footnote 14] This may include children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Early education must equip all children, without fail, with the knowledge and skills they need to make progress in Reception, through key stage 1 and beyond."

Strong foundations in the First Years of School 2024

In the EYFS we set realistic but challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. This is achieved by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Following an adaptive teaching model, ensuring scaffolding is in place for all children to succeed;
- Using a range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;

- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Safeguarding

It is important to us that all children in school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children within boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We offer children 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.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See our Safeguarding Policy)

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children. In promoting personal well-being, the focus is on respect for each child's individuality. This allows children to act and develop as their own unique personalities.
- 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.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

The BeSMART code

In Reception there is a clear emphasis on developing children's understanding of the whole school BeSMART code (See behaviour policy). Children are specifically taught appropriate behaviours. Children following the BeSMART code are celebrated through gaining rainbow cards and stickers, assemblies, star of the week and winning the Smart Cup.

Monitoring and review

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

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

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

Review and Further Developments

See the whole school development plan.

Review Date September 2026.

Appendix 1

School / Pre school transition year

April- May	Discussion with teacher at Newdale Nursery as to which children entering school. At phase meeting teachers moderate profiles of nursery children together. (a baseline entry level is agreed)
June – July	The EYFS lead carries out home visits and/or telephone calls to those children who do not attend Newdale Nursery to meet both parents and the child. Children attending Newdale Nursery spend Summer 2 taking part in a series of transition visits. Information packs go out to parents. Virtual tours are shared on the school website. Children Invited to spend time with their teacher prior to starting at our school during our “Induction Sessions”.
July	Head teacher talks to parents about school before their child starts in September.
September	First week of school children attend for half a day (either am or pm)to enable a smaller and more secure environment for children to build relationships with their new teacher. The second week children attend for full day, including lunch.
October/November	Parents of children in Nursery/Reception year are invited to discuss progress in private with the teacher and review their child’s work.
December	Parents are invited to the Christmas event.
Spring Term	Parents of children in Nursery/Reception year are invited to discuss progress in private with the teacher and review their child’s work.
June	Parents receive a written report on their child’s attainment and progress and the end of the academic year. Following reports there is an informal parents evening as a chance for discussion. Information sharing with Y1 teachers, moderating pieces of work.
July	Families are invited to Sports day.

NB. Other opportunities are provided throughout the year such as Stay and Play, Christmas and Summer Fayres, family barbeques, family lunches and other special events.