



St Matthew's Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy (Reception Year)

Date Policy Written: July 2021

Review Cycle: Biennially

Ratified by Governing Board on: N/A

Next review date: May 2028

This Policy must be read in conjunction with : Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, First Aid Policy, Medical Policy (includes supporting children with medical conditions and administration of medicines), Intimate Care Policy, Fire Risk Assessment, Complaints Policy

Our Guiding Principles

At St Matthews's Primary School we meet every child's entitlement to develop a love of learning that will enable each and every learner to have the best possible start in life.

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Effective: 1 September 2025) states four guiding principles which 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
- 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.
- importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates.

Early Years Foundation Stage at St Matthew's Primary School

Every child deserves to have an equal chance of success at St Matthew's Primary School. We understand that the learning journey will be unique to each individual. We acknowledge that early learners will develop on different pathways; and with different speeds. At St Matthew's we have identified key elements as crucial to educational progress for our pupils. These are: **reading, communication and language skills, physical development** and the ability to **self regulate** emotions, thoughts and behaviour to enable children to act in positive ways towards a goal, make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peacefully and become happy, healthy, successful learners.

These elements will be delivered through a curriculum that is rich, ambitious, driven by children's interests, contributions from parents and developed over time.

We will:

- provide an environment where children feel safe and secure
- provide a rich and stimulating curriculum, including challenging, exciting and imaginative learning environments
- provide a range of opportunities for assessment in well thought out and detailed planning
- teach children a wealth of knowledge
- build on what each child already knows and can do
- be inclusive to all groups of learners and individuals, taking into account children's backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, language spoken at home, SEND and any identified vulnerabilities
- Encourage Parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning

3. EYFS Structure

Most children will start their journey with us in the Reception year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (known as Reception Year at St Matthew's Primary School) in September; age 4-5 on entry. All Reception age children are encouraged to begin school at the start of the academic year.

At full capacity we have 120 children in our Reception year, separated into four classes. Each class has one teacher and two Teaching Assistants (at least one in each class is qualified to CACHE L3 or equivalent).

Classrooms are currently set up to have two classes sharing each large room. Children are encouraged to explore both rooms. We value the outside area as an extension to our classrooms and encourage all children to participate in activities outdoors, in all types of weather, exploring and investigating their surroundings.

4. Curriculum

Areas of Learning and Development

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, September 2025) includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

- **The prime areas are:**

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- **The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:**
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Understanding the world
 - Expressive arts and design

Our curriculum is planned to ensure that every child can be a powerful learner. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching. At St Matthew's Primary School we have a curriculum that is ever-changing and responsive to the children's backgrounds, interests and the local community. We will deliver the curriculum using the characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and Exploring - Children will show curiosity about objects, events and people and then use this curiosity to develop play. Children will 'have a go', initiating activities that derive from their own interests and seek challenges, being encouraged to take a risk.

Active Learning - Children will have a deep drive to know more and will be able to identify where they have met their goals. They will enjoy meeting challenges and will be able to concentrate and persist to find solutions and answers to their questions.

Creating and Thinking Critically - Children will be encouraged to have their own ideas and link between other ideas, making predictions and developing ideas, changing strategies where needed. Children will be able to reflect on how they have approached their learning and review what has gone well and what could be improved.

Enabling environments - children experience environments, both indoors and outdoors, that support and encourage individual interests, engagement and development needs. Children experience opportunities to develop their creativity, motivation and independence. Children are supported by knowledgeable practitioners who interact to enhance learning.

5. Planning and Teaching

Our Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum planning is based on the non-statutory guidance 'Development Matters' (DfE, First published September 2020 Revised September 2023) and is enhanced by additional focus areas such as our 'Happy Centred School' programme and our locally agreed Religious Education Syllabus. Our planning also takes into account elements of Stronger Foundations in the first years of school (Published 8th Oct 24) and we are being guided by their research. Our Curriculum has been planned following professional development opportunities provided by Luton Borough Council school improvement advisors in addition to collaboration with early adopter schools locally.

The Curriculum is delivered through a wide variety of opportunities and experiences; some of which are planned for in advance and some of which will evolve depending on the needs and interests of pupils. Sessions will include a mixture of (and not limited to) independent play, pupil-led activities, individual guidance and interactions, some whole class or large group directed teaching and small group teaching sessions. Practitioners respond to each child, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions. Practitioners are trained to skillfully observe and interact to develop learning. Early years practitioners plan together. During these planning sessions staff take into account and plan activities based on children's interests. This could be derived from a child bringing in something from home, talking about a family celebration or from observations made during child initiated play.

Our Reception environment is carefully planned to ensure all areas are used to enable learning for every child. The children have the choice of where they choose to learn during free play, be it indoors or outside. We encourage child initiated activities and adapt our continuous provision accordingly. This is enhanced through objects, prompts, conversations and questioning.

6. Opportunities for all

At St Matthew's Primary School we recognise that all children deserve to have an equal chance of success and we ensure that we have due regard to the need to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. Whilst our curriculum is designed to be fully inclusive we consider the individual support and specific resources or provision that a child might need to achieve their full potential. Staff are highly vigilant to the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND (including medical needs), vulnerable children and children in receipt of benefits related Free School Meals.

6. Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. This may be through formal or informal methods. Staff observe pupils through interactions to identify interests, skills and progression in each child's development, ensuring the child's experience is central. Practitioners notice what children can do and what they know. Practitioners regularly discuss the next steps for individuals to reshape provision. This is supported by session review notes, annotated planning, floor books and work children independently choose to keep. When considering end of year Early Learning Goals, practitioners will make a termly teacher assessment judgement to identify children who are on track or not to attain the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year. Strategies and assessment methods will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are appropriate, ensure progression in learning, whilst allowing practitioners to be fully engaging with children. This will continue to be informed by professional development and collaboration with the local authority and local schools.

The statutory DfE Baseline Assessment is completed for all pupils within the first six weeks of school. This is accompanied by an in-house baseline assessment focussing on supplementary areas. Elements of this are formally recorded on our internal tracking software 'Insight'. This evidence is used to support the identification of next steps for pupils.

At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff complete the EYFS Profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet meeting expected levels ('emerging')

The EYFS profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

6. Working with parents and or carers

Each child is assigned a key adult(Class teacher)who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key adult supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key worker also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. This may be through unplanned discussions at the start and end of the day or during formal Parent Consultation meetings. The EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities at the end of the school year.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding Policy.

All risk assessments are reviewed at least annually.

8. Paediatric first aid training

Six out of eight Early years Teaching Assistants are qualified as Paediatric First Aiders, and based in Reception Classes (September 2026).

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Early Years Team Leader, link Senior Leader and Headteacher every two years.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See First Aid Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Medical Policy and Health and Safety Policy
Administering medicines policy	See Medical Policy (includes supporting children with medical conditions and administration of medicines)
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Health and Safety Policy and Fire Risk Assessment
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints Policy and Safeguarding Policy