John Fletcher of Madeley Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

2026–2027

Reception / Early Years Provision

Policy detail	2026–2027 arrangements
Policy status	School policy
Reviewed / updated	September 2026
Next review	September 2027
Statutory framework	EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers – effective 1 September 2026

Read alongside the school's safeguarding, SEND, behaviour, health and safety, attendance, equality, first aid, medicines, intimate care, online safety and complaints policies.

Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how John Fletcher of Madeley Primary School implements the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children in Reception. It explains how we provide a safe, inclusive and ambitious curriculum and how we meet statutory requirements for learning, development, assessment, welfare and safeguarding.

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. This policy is written for our school-based provision and supports consistent practice across the EYFS team, school leaders, governors and wider staff.

Our approach places the individual child at the heart of provision. We recognise that children develop at different rates and arrive with different experiences, knowledge, language, strengths and needs.

Statutory and supporting framework

From 1 September 2026, the school follows the current EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers. The Department for Education updated the framework for September 2026, including strengthened welfare and safeguarding requirements, explicit safer-sleep wording, a requirement to have regard to screen-use guidance and other safeguarding clarifications. □cite□turn1view0□turn2search0□

The policy is also informed by:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, effective from 1 September 2026.
- Development Matters: Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS.
- Birth to 5 Matters: Non-statutory guidance for the EYFS.
- Strong Foundations in the First Years of School (2024).
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile assessment guidance and 2026 assessment support.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.

Where statutory requirements change, the school will follow the current statutory version and update this policy and associated procedures as necessary.

Our EYFS vision and curriculum intent

Our curriculum is rooted in the school's Christian values of hope and aspiration, resilience and perseverance, and compassion and forgiveness. We ensure that the individual pupil is at the heart of our decisions, taking account of background, SEND, ability and prior experience. □filecite□turn1file9□L405-L422□

Our EYFS curriculum is designed to give children a strong foundation for future learning. Communication and language are prioritised because many children in our community have speech, language and communication needs. We explicitly teach vocabulary, model language and provide structured opportunities for talk throughout the day. □filecite□turn1file5□L245-L259□

By the end of Reception, we want children to be confident communicators, curious learners and increasingly independent thinkers, with secure foundations of knowledge, vocabulary, early literacy, mathematics and learning behaviours for the next stage of education. □filecite□turn1file5□L268-L275□

Our curriculum principles

- Children learn through secure relationships, purposeful interaction and carefully planned experiences.

- The seven areas of learning are interconnected and are taught through a coherent, sequential curriculum.
- Language, vocabulary, communication and interaction are threaded through every area.
- Knowledge is explicitly taught, revisited and applied through play, adult-led teaching and continuous provision.
- High-quality texts, storytelling and talk are central to our curriculum.
- Children have sustained opportunities to practise, consolidate and apply what they know.
- The curriculum is ambitious for every child and is adapted without unnecessarily lowering expectations.
- Children's interests, experiences and needs inform provision while the intended curriculum remains clear.

The EYFS educational programmes

Our curriculum meets the seven areas of learning and development set out in the EYFS. The three prime areas are Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Physical Development. The four specific areas are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design. The areas are interconnected and are not taught in isolation. □filecite□turn1file4□L212-L232□

Area of learning	Key curriculum emphasis
Communication and Language	Listening and attention; understanding; speaking; vocabulary; back-and-forth interaction; explanation and reasoning.
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Relationships; emotional regulation; self-confidence; independence; managing self; resilience; healthy choices and safety.
Physical Development	Gross and fine motor development; coordination; strength; movement; healthy lifestyles; self-care and independence.
Literacy	High-quality texts; comprehension; phonological awareness; systematic phonics; reading; writing; vocabulary and storytelling.
Mathematics	Number; quantity; subitising; composition; counting; numerical relationships; shape, space and measure; mathematical language and reasoning.
Understanding the World	Past and present; people, culture and communities; natural world; environments; change; comparison; enquiry and first-hand experiences.
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with materials; music; singing; movement; imaginative play; role play; storytelling; exploration of artistic processes.

Our 2026–2027 curriculum

The 2026–2027 long-term plan provides the context through which statutory learning is sequenced and revisited. Topics and high-quality texts provide meaningful contexts for developing knowledge and skills across the seven areas.

Term	Topic	Core texts / experiences	Talk for Writing focus
Autumn 1	Marvellous Me!	Dear Zoo; We're Going on a Bear Hunt	Description / action
Autumn 2	Celebrations and Festivals	Gingerbread Man; The Nativity	Action
Spring 1	Journeys	Whatever Next?; nursery rhymes	Setting / description

Spring 2	Down on the Farm	Nursery rhymes; The Little Red Hen	Action / openings and endings
Summer 1	Under the Sea	Recount of trip to Sea Centre	Recount
Summer 2	Growing	The Very Hungry Caterpillar (innovation)	Characterisation

High-quality texts are a key feature of our curriculum. Children participate in daily story time and book talk, including anticipating and retelling events, discussing characters and settings, developing vocabulary and talking about authors and illustrators. □filecite□turn0file0□L95-L106□

Vocabulary is deliberately selected, explained, modelled, revisited and applied. Our curriculum rationale identifies progression from everyday Tier 1 vocabulary to Tier 2 language for thinking and reasoning and Tier 3 subject-specific vocabulary, supported by Concept Cat, Talk Boost, sentence stems, oracy approaches, Talk for Writing, Read Write Inc and 'Wonderful Words'. □filecite□turn1file5□L250-L259□

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, and Creating and Thinking Critically. They underpin learning across all seven areas and are considered when adults plan, interact, observe and assess. □filecite□turn1file6□L288-L311□

Playing and Exploring

Children investigate, explore, take risks safely, make choices and 'have a go'.

Active Learning

Children concentrate, persevere, practise and experience the satisfaction of achieving something.

Creating and Thinking Critically

Children develop ideas, make links, solve problems, test possibilities and develop strategies.

Teaching, pedagogy and continuous provision

We use a balance of explicit adult teaching, guided interaction, child-initiated learning and carefully planned continuous provision. Our practice recognises that both play-based learning and direct instruction have value; the teaching approach is selected according to the knowledge or skill children are learning. □filecite□turn1file2□L102-L115□

- Adult-directed teaching introduces and secures new knowledge and skills in a clear sequence.
- Guided interaction allows adults to model, question, explain, extend vocabulary and support thinking.
- Child-initiated 'Challenge Time' enables children to plan, carry out and evaluate their own play and apply taught knowledge.
- Continuous provision provides repeated opportunities to practise and generalise knowledge and skills.
- Adults observe children's play, join purposefully, model language and extend learning without taking over children's ideas.
- Indoor and outdoor provision are planned as complementary learning environments.

Our curriculum rationale describes a balance of adult-directed teaching and carefully planned continuous provision, with adults modelling language, extending thinking and supporting connections. □filecite□turn1file5□L268-L270□

Communication, language and vocabulary

Communication and language are a whole-school priority within EYFS. Adults model accurate and ambitious language, give children time to respond, use open questions where appropriate, recast and extend children's utterances, and explicitly teach new vocabulary.

- Provide frequent opportunities for back-and-forth interaction with adults and peers.
- Use visual supports, objects, gestures, Makaton or other agreed communication systems where these support access.
- Pre-teach and revisit key vocabulary linked to stories, topics and children's experiences.
- Use sentence stems and structured talk to support children who need additional scaffolding.
- Support children with speech, language and communication needs through targeted provision and advice from relevant professionals.
- Value children's home languages and work with families to support communication and language development.

Phonics, early reading and writing

Systematic phonics is taught through the school's agreed phonics programme, Read Write Inc. Children have daily opportunities to practise phonological awareness and phonics, apply taught sounds, read decodable texts and develop fluency.

Reading for pleasure is developed alongside phonics. Children have access to high-quality stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction, with daily story time and book talk. Children take home books matched to their current reading development alongside books chosen for pleasure, in line with school arrangements. The 2026–2027 curriculum identifies high-quality texts and daily book talk as central to developing vocabulary, comprehension and storytelling. □filecite□turn0file0□L95-L106□

Writing develops through oral composition, storytelling, mark-making, phonics application, fine-motor development and meaningful opportunities to communicate ideas.

Mathematics

Mathematics is taught through a coherent progression, including the school's Mastering Number approach. Children develop secure understanding of number, quantity, composition, counting, subitising, comparison, numerical relationships, shape, space and measure, alongside mathematical vocabulary and reasoning.

Children encounter mathematics through explicit teaching, small-group work, practical experiences, songs, routines and continuous provision. Adults model mathematical language and encourage children to explain their thinking.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We explicitly teach children how to build relationships, manage feelings and behaviour, develop self-confidence, become independent and make healthy and safe choices. The 2026–2027 curriculum includes planned Jigsaw learning and the school's behaviour curriculum alongside daily opportunities to practise social and emotional skills. □filecite□turn0file0□L239-L404□

- Build warm, predictable and respectful relationships.
- Teach and model emotional vocabulary and strategies for regulation.
- Develop independence in dressing, toileting, eating, tidying, accessing resources and managing belongings.

- Teach children how to keep themselves safe and how to seek help.
- Promote resilience, perseverance and positive attitudes towards challenge.
- Address discriminatory behaviour promptly and in an age-appropriate way.

Physical development, health and wellbeing

Children have regular opportunities for gross- and fine-motor development indoors and outdoors. Provision supports balance, coordination, strength, spatial awareness, pencil control, tool use and self-care.

Healthy eating, hygiene, oral health, sleep and rest, physical activity and emotional wellbeing are addressed through routines, direct teaching and the curriculum. Children are supported to recognise when they need help and to develop increasing independence.

Any sleep or rest arrangements will follow current EYFS safer-sleep requirements and the child's individual needs. From 1 September 2026, safer-sleep requirements are stated explicitly within the EYFS statutory framework. □cite□turn1view0□

Understanding the World

Children learn through first-hand experiences, observation, exploration, discussion and comparison. The curriculum moves from noticing and describing towards comparing, explaining and recognising patterns and change over time. □filecite□turn1file5□L260-L264□

- People, families, communities and significant experiences.
- Past and present, including changes in children's own lives and familiar objects.
- The natural world, seasons, plants, animals, habitats and caring for the environment.
- Different cultures, beliefs, celebrations and ways of life.
- Simple technology and its uses, with attention to safe and purposeful use.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children have daily opportunities to explore music, singing, movement, art, design, role play, storytelling and imaginative play. Adults model techniques and introduce materials, artists, musicians and creative processes while preserving space for children to experiment and develop their own ideas.

Inclusion, SEND and equality

Inclusion is integral to our EYFS provision. We maintain high expectations for all children and make reasonable adaptations so that children can access the curriculum and participate meaningfully. Our curriculum rationale identifies inclusion, confidence, independence and resilience as core principles. □filecite□turn1file5□L271-L275□

- Identify additional needs as early as possible through discussion with families, observations, assessment and information from previous settings and professionals.
- Follow the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review where additional SEN support is required.
- Use individualised targets and small-step progression where appropriate, while maintaining meaningful access to the EYFS curriculum.
- Work closely with the SENCO, families and relevant professionals, including speech and language therapists and other specialists.

- Use communication supports and adaptations such as visual timetables, symbols, Makaton, objects of reference, sensory approaches or assistive communication where appropriate.
- For children with EHCPs, use the outcomes and provision specified in the plan to inform curriculum access, support and review.

Assessment, observation and planning

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and is used to understand what children know, understand and can do, identify gaps or misconceptions, and decide what to teach next. It is not an end in itself.

- Assessment is primarily through professional observation, interaction, discussion, children's work and performance in everyday learning.
- Adults use assessment information to adapt teaching, provision, vocabulary and next steps.
- We avoid unnecessary recording and do not require observations solely for the purpose of producing paperwork.
- Evidence is recorded selectively in learning journeys and/or the school's digital platform when it adds value to understanding children's development.
- Progress is reviewed through team discussion and pupil progress processes.
- Assessment information is used to identify children who may need additional teaching or support.

The school's existing approach uses observation to inform future planning and records learning in learning journeys or digitally. □filecite□turn1file3□L151-L160□

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment is completed within the required assessment window. The 2026 arrangements state that RBA data is used by the Department for Education for primary school progress measures; teachers should not use the RBA assessment framework to guide teaching and learning. □cite□turn0search13□

The RBA is one source of information. Teachers also build a broader picture through transition information, family discussion, observation and ongoing assessment.

EYFS Profile and Good Level of Development

At the end of Reception, the statutory EYFS Profile is completed using teachers' professional judgements against the Early Learning Goals. Judgements are based on the child's knowledge, understanding and skills as demonstrated through everyday learning and relevant evidence.

Good Level of Development (GLD) is a specific statutory measure. A child is assessed as having achieved GLD when they have achieved the expected level in the ELGs in the three prime areas and the specific areas of Literacy and Mathematics. GLD does not mean that a child has achieved the expected level in all seven areas.

The DfE's 2026 assessment support emphasises accurate and consistent professional judgement, inclusive assessment and professional dialogue between EYFS and Year 1 colleagues. □cite□turn1view2□

Relationships, behaviour and emotional regulation

We use a positive, relational and developmentally appropriate approach to behaviour. Expectations are taught explicitly and reinforced consistently. Adults seek to understand the communication, developmental, sensory and emotional needs underlying behaviour.

- Use calm, respectful language and predictable routines.
- Teach children what successful behaviour looks and sounds like.

- Praise and notice positive choices, effort, independence and kindness.
- Use co-regulation and support children to develop strategies for managing strong emotions.
- Work with families and relevant professionals when behaviour indicates an unmet need.
- Follow the school's behaviour policy and safeguarding procedures where behaviour raises a welfare concern.

Safeguarding and child protection

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. EYFS provision operates within the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. KCSIE 2026 is statutory guidance in force from 1 September 2026, and Working Together 2026 is the current multi-agency statutory guidance. □cite□turn3search0□turn3search5□

- All staff follow the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and report concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or in accordance with school procedures.
- All staff understand that safeguarding concerns may arise from attendance, behaviour, communication, presentation, disclosures, online activity, neglect, abuse or changes in circumstances.
- Staff maintain professional boundaries and follow safer-working practices.
- The school follows safer recruitment, suitability, DBS and training requirements.
- Children are taught age-appropriate personal safety, relationships, boundaries and how to seek help.
- Safeguarding records are maintained securely and shared appropriately on a need-to-know basis.

September 2026 EYFS welfare and safeguarding updates

- The school follows the strengthened safer-sleep wording in the 2026 EYFS framework.
- The school has regard to current DfE guidance on children's screen use in early years settings.
- The school follows the 2026 requirements relating to banned dog breeds and ensures that prohibited childcare arrangements do not occur on premises.
- The school follows the updated requirements concerning allegations of harm and safeguarding notifications.
- The school follows current requirements for criminal records checks and suitability of staff and volunteers.

The DfE identifies these as key changes to the EYFS framework from 1 September 2026. □cite□turn1view0□

Screen use and digital technology

From 1 September 2026, EYFS providers are required to have regard to DfE guidance on screen use in early years settings. □cite□turn1view0□

- Digital technology is used purposefully and only where it adds educational value.
- Screen use does not replace high-quality interaction, physical activity, outdoor learning, practical experiences, books, play or conversation.
- Adults model safe and appropriate use of technology.
- Children are supported to understand simple online safety messages appropriate to their age and development.
- Photographs, videos and digital records of children are managed in accordance with school safeguarding, data protection and acceptable-use procedures.

Staffing, key person and professional practice

Children are cared for by suitable, appropriately qualified staff and staffing arrangements comply with the EYFS requirements for group and school-based providers. The school maintains appropriate staffing, supervision and deployment to meet children's learning, development and welfare needs.

- Every child has a named key person or identified key adult who helps the child feel secure and supports communication with the family.
- Staff receive appropriate induction, safeguarding training and professional development.
- The EYFS leader monitors teaching, provision, assessment and statutory compliance.
- Staff work collaboratively and communicate relevant information about children's learning, wellbeing and needs.
- Adults model professional, respectful and inclusive behaviour at all times.

Health, safety, hygiene, food, toileting and medicines

The school maintains safe and hygienic environments and follows its whole-school procedures for health and safety, first aid, food, allergies, medicines, intimate care, infection control and emergency procedures.

- Children are supervised appropriately, including during eating and outdoor learning.
- Food allergies, intolerances and medical needs are recorded and managed through the school's agreed procedures.
- Children are encouraged to develop independence with handwashing, toileting, dressing and personal care.
- Intimate care is carried out respectfully, safely and in line with individual plans where required.
- Medicines are administered only in accordance with the school's medicines and medical conditions procedures and relevant parental/medical authorisation.
- Staff with required first-aid responsibilities maintain appropriate qualifications and training.
- Risk assessment is proportionate and supports children to experience appropriate challenge and managed risk.

Learning environment and outdoor provision

The environment is an active part of the curriculum. Resources are accessible, purposeful, inclusive and sufficiently open-ended to support children to practise and apply knowledge independently.

Children have access to indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. The school recognises the contribution outdoor learning makes to physical development, wellbeing, exploration, sensory experiences and understanding of the natural world. □filecite□turn1file7□L332-L358□

- Provide calm, inviting spaces as well as opportunities for active learning.
- Ensure resources reflect diversity and avoid stereotyping.
- Adapt the environment to support children's sensory, communication, physical and learning needs.
- Use displays and prompts to reinforce vocabulary and key knowledge without overloading the environment.
- Review continuous provision regularly in response to children's learning and identified next steps.

Parents and carers as partners

Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. We build respectful two-way relationships and value family knowledge of the child.

- Gather information before children start through visits, conversations and induction.
- Share information about the curriculum, routines and ways families can support learning at home.

- Use Tapestry and other agreed communication methods to share learning and invite family contributions.
- Invite parents/carers to share children's interests, achievements and experiences from home.
- Communicate promptly about significant concerns, progress or additional support needs.
- Provide a written report at the end of Reception in line with statutory requirements and school arrangements.

These arrangements build on the school's established induction, parent communication, home learning and Tapestry approaches. □filecite□turn1file1□L74-L87□

Transition

Transition is planned as a process rather than a single event. We work with families and previous settings to understand children's strengths, needs, interests, communication, routines and experiences.

- Provide opportunities for children and families to become familiar with the school, staff and environment before starting.
- Use information from previous settings and professionals to plan an appropriate start.
- Plan targeted transition support for children who may need additional preparation.
- Support children to develop independence and readiness for Year 1.
- Share relevant assessment and curriculum information with Year 1 staff and support professional dialogue.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The EYFS leader, Headteacher and governing body monitor the quality and effectiveness of EYFS provision. Monitoring considers statutory compliance, curriculum implementation, teaching, learning, assessment, inclusion, safeguarding, welfare, outcomes and staff development.

- The named EYFS governor receives updates and provides challenge and support.
- EYFS practice is included in the school's monitoring and improvement cycle.
- Assessment information is analysed to identify strengths, gaps and groups who may require additional support.
- Staff reflect on the effectiveness of curriculum, provision and adult interaction.
- The policy is reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Headteacher	Ensures statutory requirements are met and that EYFS is appropriately resourced, staffed, safeguarded and monitored.
EYFS Leader / Reception Teacher	Leads curriculum implementation, assessment, staff practice, provision, transition and EYFS improvement.
SENCO	Coordinates SEND identification, provision, graduated response and professional collaboration.
DSL	Leads safeguarding and child protection arrangements and ensures EYFS staff follow current safeguarding guidance.
EYFS Staff	Implement the curriculum, provide high-quality interactions, safeguard children, assess learning and work in partnership with families.

EYFS Governor	Provides oversight, support and appropriate challenge regarding EYFS provision and statutory compliance.

Key associated school policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- SEND / Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions / Medicines Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Equality and Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Complaints Policy

Reference documents and sources checked for this update

- EYFS statutory framework – current 2026 version. GOV.UK confirms that the group and school-based framework took effect on 1 September 2026. □cite□turn2search0□
- Changes to the EYFS framework from 1 September 2026 – DfE Help for Early Years Providers. □cite□turn1view0□
- EYFS Profile assessment support – DfE, 2026. □cite□turn1view2□
- 2026 Reception Baseline Assessment: assessment and reporting arrangements. □cite□turn0search13□
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. □cite□turn3search0□
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. □cite□turn3search5□
- John Fletcher of Madeley EYFS Curriculum 2026–2027. □filecite□turn1file9□L405-L422□
- John Fletcher of Madeley EYFS Curriculum Rationale. □filecite□turn1file5□L245-L275□

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated sooner where there are changes to statutory EYFS requirements, safeguarding guidance, assessment arrangements or relevant school procedures.

Review date: September 2027