THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Methodist Church

John Fletcher of Madeley
Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy





Reviewed and Updated: September 2025

Next Review due: September 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)

At John Fletcher of Madeley Primary we believe that all children have potential and learn better:

- when they can encounter new, interesting experiences
- by actively involving themselves in an experience
- in an environment of warm trusting relationships
- when there are good partnerships between home and school
- when working with others as part of a group
- with knowledgeable, supportive adults who listen and respond
- when adults and children reflect on previous learning, develop ideas and plan next steps
- when children feel that their interests and ideas are valued and they are able to value the contribution of others
- in an environment rich with possibilities to develop and express ideas when they can respond creatively
- when they are motivated

We aim to understand how children learn and develop and the practices through which we can enhance that process. How we teach is rooted in values and beliefs about what we want for children and supported by knowledge, theory and experience.

At John Flecther we plan for opportunities where the child can take ownership of their learning and through adult support. This is valued and developed to move their learning on through child initiated sessions and work linked to a theme. In addition, following observation the adult plans and leads specific focused activities to develop skills, concepts and knowledge relevant to the child.

The Curriculum

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

Effective Learning

The ways in which a child engages with other people and their environment-playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically- underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Positive Relationships

At John Flecther of Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments

At John Fletcher Primary School we recognise that 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.

Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. The 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.

At John Fletcher Primary School the children are in charge of their own learning and they are encouraged to select activities of their choosing from around both the indoor and outdoor environments, including our beautiful wooded areas. Adults plan stimuli each week for the different area of the environment to try and focus and give learning a new direction.

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 John Fletcher of Madeley Primary 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.

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/Nursery

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 prior to starting school 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 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.
- Tapestry is an online platform in which observations of the child's learning is shared with the Parents. 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' also form part of the child's learning journey profile.

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

Our Specialist Resource Base

We are lucky enough to have a specialist resource base within our school. In this provision, we will at times have children of Reception age and older, working at an early stage of development.

The school has mapped out the intended progression of the fundamental skills and knowledge for pupils working below their age-related expectations. In EYFS, it is anticipated that pupils will be working at an 'emerging' level across the Early Learning Goals on completion of their EYFS Profile due to complex nature of their SEND. This is informed by baseline assessments on entry to EYFS, information from previous settings and multiagency professionals, parents and carers. We take into account EHCP long term outcomes into account when baselining and setting new outcomes. Outcomes are reviewed with parents six monthly, and fall in line with their annual review.

For pupils working in Key Stage 1 onwards, they are working below pre-key stage standards and that are pre-subject specific. The school has also outlined the progression of early foundational skills and knowledge for each area of learning and development which is aligned with the whole school curriculum progression. This incorporates an evidence-based progression of key concepts alongside targeted vocabulary. The bespoke, sequenced, small-step descriptors within the bands provide a broad and balanced intended sequence of learning for pupils, after each pupil's initial baseline on joining school. For each pupil their identified next steps will be based on their assessed skills and knowledge rather than for their age or year group.

Due to the needs of the pupils in the resource base, some may not make linear progression through the bands and present with an uneven profile. In line with these needs, descriptors may be broken down further and tailored to meet the needs of the individual. The descriptors are designed in line with statutory requirements, and are reviewed on an on-going basis linked to developments in research to ensure our practice remains evidence based. The skills and knowledge progression has taken account of Statutory Framework for the early years' foundation stage; Development Matters; Birth to Five Matters; research and liaison with therapists in relation to the school curriculum. The following form the foundation of all delivery:

• engagement and enjoyment
• communication and understanding
• personal and social development including increasing awareness of self, their own emotions, and relationships with others.
• independence including life-skills.

A Unique Child

At John Fletcher of Madeley Primary School we recognise

- that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates
- that 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

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
- using a wide 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.

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.