Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) POLICY

Approval Date	October 2026
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Adopted by Trust Board	October 2026
Review Date	October 2027

CONTENTS

Section	Description	Page No.
1	Aims	3
2	Legislation	3
3	Structure	3
4	Curriculum	3
5	Planning	4
6	Teaching	4
7	Role of the Adult	4
8	Role of the Environment	6
9	Assessment	7
10	Special Educational Needs (SEND)	8
11	Working with Parents and Carers	8
12	Transition into School	9
13	Transition into Year 1	9
14	Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures	11
15	Monitoring Arrangements	13

1 Aims

1.1 This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through School and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between Staff and Parents and/or Carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2 Legislation

2.1 This policy is based on the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for group and school-based providers, incorporating the safeguarding and welfare amendments effective from 1 September 2026 and subsequent updates issued by the Department for Education

3 Structure

3.1 Stoke Damerel Primary Academy are 2 form entry for Foundation children. There are 2 fully qualified teachers along with HLTAS and TAS to support in the EYFS unit.

4 Curriculum

4.1 Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework.

4.2 The EYFS framework includes Seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. Three 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

4.3 The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

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

4.4 In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

4.4.1 **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

4.4.2 **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.

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4.4.3 **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own thinkings skills.

4.5 *Playing and Exploring* - Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise 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 have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. We deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

4.6 *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. This provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

4.7 *Creativity and Thinking Critically* - Children are given an opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can 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.

5 Planning

5.1 Our Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, Staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas.

5.2 Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, Staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies where appropriate.

5.3 In planning and guiding children's activities, Staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

6 Teaching

6.1 Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

6.2 As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

7 Role of the Adult

7.1 Once adults are allocated their groups/activities they should ensure that they are supporting each child's learning through play. It is crucial that practitioners interact sensitively and skillfully to support and enhance the children's learning.

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7.2 Through the use of the ShREC approach:

7.2.1 **Share Attention** – be at the child's level, pay close attention to what they do.

7.2.2 **Respond** - follow the child's lead. Respond to their non-verbal and verbal communication. Make a brief comment on what they can see, hear and feel.

7.2.3 **Expand** - repeat what the child says and build on it by adding more words to turn it into a sentence.

7.2.4 **Conversation** - have extended back and forth interactions. Give children time to listen, process and reply.

7.3 All adults should make children feel valued, celebrate their accomplishments and ensure that they have a good knowledge of each child. Adults need to be aware of each child's interests, how they learn and their strengths and targets as this will allow them to support each individual in the best way possible. Children will be provided with the opportunity to become deeply involved in their activities and to follow their ideas through independently, with other children, with adults and with their Parents during stay and play sessions. The children should be allowed to return to activities at a later date if they feel like they have more to learn from that particular activity.

7.4 Adults are aware that child-initiated activity is a powerful opportunity for learning, and make the most of this. The adults within EYFS will:

7.4.1 Maintain their focus on the learning that is taking place and actively use a range of strategies to support and extend learning through engagement with the children. This may include introducing new vocabulary and new ideas, thinking out loud, modelling more complex ways of speaking, highlighting new problems, encouraging negotiation between each other and encouraging the explanation or demonstration of the approaches they are choosing.

7.4.2 Offer assistance and support where appropriate and where it is needed to help children to be successful in following their own ideas and the ideas of others.

7.4.3 Ensure that the learning environment offers a range of stimulating open-ended equipment and resources both outdoors and indoors, which children can use and combine in their own way to meet their own purposes. Where equipment and resources are not available, all adults will be responsible for ensuring these are sourced as soon as possible.

7.4.4 Ensure that children have sustained time to develop their activities. Where time runs out, adults will ensure other opportunities are given to that child if he or she feels like there is still learning to be done.

7.4.5 Encourage children to use the language of learning as they make their plans and carry out and review their activities. Children should be encouraged to talk about things such as 'I remembered, I tried, we found out, we know, I can, we thought, we solved the problem.' It is important that adults model this vocabulary to support children's understanding of it.

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7.4.6 Use a problem-solving approach to resolving conflicts or behavioural issues, helping children to be aware of the points of view of others and working together to agree on a solution. Children should be supported in their understanding of everyone's differences and the skills that they may bring to an activity.

7.4.7 Observe children's activities carefully, trying to discover what the child is thinking about and learning and the goals of the play, so they can accurately support and extend the child's learning focus either at the time, or later by changes to the environment or in planned activities.

7.4.8 Observe children regularly and highlight opportunities they have seen which will support future planning and learning. All Staff will be part of planning discussions and will be responsible for sharing what they have seen and ideas they have on how this can be developed through provision for the following week.

8 Role of the Environment

8.1 The environment within the Early Years plays an extremely important role in supporting children's learning and development. The environment is a teaching tool used by both adults and children and it is there to promote children's independence within all that they do. When adults, Parents and children enter our setting it is important that it has a positive atmosphere where all feel safe, happy and relaxed; it is at this point where the personal, social and emotional well-being of all involved will be secure, and positive relationships can be built and learning can begin to take place.

8.2 Rich, stimulating and purposeful environments have an immediate effect on the quality of children's learning and development. The learning environment needs to be set up so it is suitable for the children using it; you should be able to see a clear difference between a Nursery and Reception environment. All environments should be comfortable, attractive and interesting. They should allow children to feel happy and safe and the children should see it as a home away from home.

8.3 The learning environment will be flexible and accommodate children's ever-changing fascinations, interests and needs. Resources and areas of provision will be of the highest quality to promote independent play and continual learning from all children in all aspects of the curriculum. The environment should be checked and restocked daily by all Staff to ensure the areas are set up and ready for the learning taking place the following day. Each week it is important that class Teachers use what they have observed throughout the week and check each area within their classroom and ensure it is still purposeful and appropriate for what the children need.

8.4 Many of our pupils begin School with a deficit of experiences. It is therefore the role of the EYFS Staff to ensure that these experiences are enhanced whilst the children are at School. Provision will be of the highest quality and will provide children with excellent firsthand experiences to enhance learning.

8.5 When setting up an Early Years environment there should be evidence of:

- Templating with name and picture of resource
- Photographs of children using the areas
- Relevant books (both fiction and non-fiction)
- Writing opportunities
- Key words (with a focus on key verbs)

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- Key questions
- Alphabet/Phonics sounds
- Numerals
- Shape Space and Measure
- Natural resources

8.6 Not all areas need to have all the above as at times this may not be appropriate, however there needs to be clear evidence of all across many areas of each classroom. Environments will be checked on a regular basis by the Early Years Lead and the environment checklist will be used.

8.7 The outdoor environment is also an important part of children's learning and adults will put as much time, effort and resources into this area as for many children, this will be their main learning space. The outdoor environment will be available to children throughout the day where appropriate when a dynamic risk assessment allows. Children should be able to move outdoors in ways where they may be restricted inside. Providing outdoor space allows children to explore different ways their body can move and develop their gross motor skills. Children can become inquisitive and fascinated by the natural world that surrounds them, and they can use their senses to explore different aspects of this. Being outdoors allows children to play on a large scale; they can work together to construct, problem solve, take risks and be creative. The outdoor area will support active learning and when balanced with small spaces for reflection will enhance children's learning.

8.8 Resources used outdoors should be suitable for outdoor play and be larger than resources used inside; they should not be indoor resources taken outside. Resources used outside will be open-ended items such as crates, tarpaulin, plant pots and logs. The resources will support children's understanding of the world and provide opportunities for them to explore the natural environment which surrounds them.

9 Assessment

9.1 Ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by Parents and/or Carers.

9.2 When a child is aged between two and three, Staff review their progress and provide Parents and/or Carers with a written summary of the child's development in the three prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

9.3 Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception, Staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Children starting Reception and Nursery will undertake a WellComm assessment to identify whether any specific support is required to support a child's speech and language development.

9.4 At the end of the EYFS, Staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the seventeen early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

9.5 The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with Parents and/or Carers. The results of the profile are shared with Parents and/or Carers for their child.

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9.6 The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local Schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority upon request.

9.7 At the end of the academic year, each child within the phase will receive a report; these will be written by the class Teacher.

10 Special Educational Needs (SEND)

10.1 In line with the requirements of the code of practice we use the graduated approach. This consists of four stages of action: **assess, plan, do** and **review**. It forms a good basis for reflective practice and developing high quality teaching.

10.2 Adults within EYFS in consultation with Parents/Carers conclude that a child may need additional support to help them progress, Staff should seek the help of the SENCO. The SENCO and colleagues will collect all known information about the child and seek additional information from the Parents/Carers. This information will help the key person and SENCO formulate a detailed plan to meet the needs of the individual child.

10.3 The SEND Code of Practice requires us to implement a person-centered approach to assessment and planning. This is called 'One Planning'. It is a continual process of listening and learning about what is important **to** and **for** the child. This is put together with the child, family, SENCO, keyperson and any other relevant professionals working together to make it happen. One plans are reviewed and updated on a regular basis (each term).

10.4 External support services will advise on learning outcomes for a child and provide specialist input to support the process.

10.5 *Education Health and Care Plan* - Where a child has significant needs and is not making the expected progress despite us having taken relevant and purposeful action to meet their needs, we are able to support Parental requests for an assessment for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). In some instances, we can make requests on the Parents behalf. During the course of an EHC needs assessment, the local authority has a duty to gather advice from relevant professionals about the child's education, health and care provision that may be required to meet the identified needs and achieve desired outcomes. An EHCP is designed to support a child to achieve the best outcomes possible. The plan records what support and provision is needed to help the child achieve the desired outcomes.

11 Working with Parents and Carers

11.1 We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between Staff and Parents and/or Carers.

11.2 We encourage Parent partnership through:

- Showing respect and understanding for the role of the Parent in the child's education
- Listening to accounts of their child's development and any concerns they may have
- Making Parents feel welcome by being friendly, approachable and having an open-door policy
- Maintaining an on-going dialogue
- Being flexible in arrangements for settling children in
- Meeting with Parents of EYFS children regularly to discuss progress
- Inviting Parents in to share their child's learning and see a range of work
- Inviting Parents in the School to share their specialised skills

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- Inviting Parents to accompany Staff on trips

11.3 Parents and/or Carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide Parents and/or Carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

11.4 Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports Parents and/or Carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

11.5 Parents and carers will receive information regarding attendance expectations, reporting procedures for absence and the safeguarding measures the setting may undertake where attendance concerns arise.

12 Transition into School

12.1 In this policy, 'transition' describes the movement that takes place from one year to the next, and in particular from one phase of education to the next within the School. This is different from 'transfer' which describes the movement from one School to the next.

12.2 It is important that children transitioning into School get as many opportunities to experience Reception/Nursery before their start date. All Staff who will be working within Early Years are asked to attend a welcome meeting for Parents. During the meeting, the Early Years Lead will give a presentation talking about:

- The Daily Routine
- Uniform
- PE
- Things to do with your child to help prepare them for School
- Reading and Phonics
- Lunchtime
- Stay and Play
- Staff
- Curriculum
- Learning Journeys
- Attendance

12.3 Parents/Carers also have the opportunity to ask Staff any questions they may have and have a look around the Early Years classrooms.

12.4 If a child starting our School attends another Nursery, where possible, a member of Staff should go and visit them within that setting. The purpose of this is to discuss the child with their current key worker, to view their Learning Journey, to get a good idea of where they are working at academically and what their current interests are in order to support Staff in the set-up of the new environment and specific resources.

12.5 Children may have been visited in their own home and current setting, once this is done the Parents/Carers are informed of two stay and play sessions. The Parents/Carers (current Nursery also) are encouraged to bring their child along to at least one session where they can meet Staff and other children they will be with from September.

13 Transition into Year 1

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13.1 Transition from Reception to Year 1 presents a unique challenge as children move from the play-based approach of the Early Years Foundation Stage to the demands of the more formal approach of the KS1 National Curriculum. We understand that rapid change can be challenging for children, potentially causing feelings of insecurity or stress, which may impact their behaviour and overall wellbeing. We believe that a successful transition is the result of effective communication and a planned induction to Year 1 with the gradual implementation of a more formal KS1 curriculum.

13.2 This belief is documented in Ofsted's Bold Beginnings, 2017 which states: 'The need for Reception and Year 1 Teachers to be given time to share and talk about data so that it can be used positively to shape an engaging and tailored learning space for young children as they transition from Early Years to Key Stage 1'.

13.3 It is our intention that all children at our School experience a smooth educational and emotional transition from one phase to the next by:

- Promoting the smooth transition of children
- Preventing and alleviating stress in order to promote emotional wellbeing and involvement
- Promoting continuity of teaching and learning by sharing knowledge of children's development and different curriculums, to inform practice

13.4 Children and Parents are actively involved in the transition process and their perceptions about transition to Year 1 are explored and valued. There are clear curriculum guidelines for children with SEND during transition as well as those still at the early stages of learning English.

13.5 We expect that:

13.5.1 Children should enjoy the transition process.

13.5.2 The transition should motivate and challenge children.

13.5.3 Transitions are an essential part of growing up. Successful transition leads to a more confident and resilient child.

13.5.4 Children's emotional welfare, wellbeing and involvement should be assessed before and after transition.

13.5.5 Transition includes changes in environment, circumstances and relationships.

13.5.6 Approaches to teaching and learning should be harmonised at the point of transition.

13.5.7 Styles of teaching and learning should meet the needs of children and not preconceived notions of what is or is not appropriate for the next phase/Key Stage.

13.5.8 There should be a professional regard for the information from the previous setting/phase.

13.5.9 Staff allocation for a period prior and during transition should be made to maximise the comfort and welfare of the children.

13.5.10 Effective transition takes time, and is a process rather than an event.

13.5.11 Parents and Carers need to feel well informed about and comfortable with all transitions in their child's life.

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13.5.12Transition is about the setting fitting the child, not the child fitting the setting.

13.6 Successful transition takes careful thought and thorough planning well in advance. All Staff must be aware of the systems that are currently in place. During Term 6, EYFS Record of Transfer meetings are held between the EYFS Lead and Year 1 Teacher to discuss the transition between the stages. These meetings allow for data, expertise and experiences of individual children to be shared and discussed.

13.7 The Foundation Stage Leader will ensure transition discussions take place for all children individually with specific actions agreed during handover. All data will be shared including;

- Characteristics of effective learning
- EYFS Record of Transfer
- Individual Assessment evidence
- Additional Educational Need (AEN) file
- Data generated by Arbor
- RWI assessment grid

13.8 Children are discussed in detail with individual needs covered and targets agreed for children to continue working on during the Autumn term. There will be a 'moving up day' where the time is dedicated to children going up to their new room for short periods.

13.9 Those children who are entering Year 1 working at an Emerging level will be planned for using the Development Matters document in conjunction with the National Curriculum and, where appropriate Prior Key Stage and P-scales are also considered. On entry to the Foundation Stage some children present with low social and emotional starting points which can impact on the developmental stages and readiness for learning. It is expected that children who are working at low developmental stages at the start of Year 1, without any identified learning needs, will have their progress accelerated during the year, therefore moving to age Expected National Curriculum levels. By the end of Year 1, the national expectation is for children to be working at Expected level within Band 6 or 7.

13.10 During Term 1 of Year 1, the Early Years Outcomes and National Curriculum will be used to inform planning, assessment and to identify gaps in children's learning. By the end of Term 2 it is expected that the majority of children will be working within being taught from the National Curriculum. Children identified as working below National Curriculum expectations will need further support and intervention. Guidance from the SENCO may be required at this point. Year 1 plans ensure that the children gradually become more confident and independent through high expectations of individuals and guided group work.

14 Attendance

14.1 In line with EYFS safeguarding requirements, unexplained or prolonged absences will be followed up promptly. Parents and carers are expected to notify the setting of the reason for absence. The setting will maintain an attendance procedure outlining actions taken where a child is absent without notification or for an extended period.

15 First Aid

15.1 The setting will ensure that at least one person holding a current full Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on educational visits. Staff, apprentices, trainees, students and volunteers who are counted within statutory ratios will meet current EYFS paediatric first aid requirements. Paediatric first aid certificates will be renewed in accordance with national requirements

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16 Mealtimes and Food Safety

16.1 Children will be supervised appropriately during meal and snack times. The setting will maintain up-to-date information regarding allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements and ensure this information is readily accessible to relevant staff. Consideration will be given to choking risks and age-appropriate food preparation. Where children in the EYFS are eating, a member of staff with current paediatric first aid training will be available.

17 Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

17.1 We recognise that children learn best when they are healthy safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

17.2 The Trust will operate robust safer recruitment procedures in line with EYFS requirements. References will be obtained and scrutinised before employment commences wherever possible. Safeguarding policies and recruitment processes will clearly set out how the suitability of staff, volunteers and regular visitors is assessed.

17.3 Where possible, the setting will hold more than two emergency contact details for each child to support safeguarding and welfare arrangements.

17.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for liaison with external agencies and supporting staff with safeguarding concerns. All staff will receive safeguarding training in accordance with EYFS requirements. The Trust will maintain records of safeguarding training and ensure staff receive regular updates to keep their knowledge current. Training will be refreshed at least every two years, with additional updates provided where required.

17.5 The Trust maintains a whistleblowing procedure to enable staff, volunteers and contractors to raise concerns regarding poor practice, safeguarding or health and safety matters. All concerns will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

17.6 Children's dignity and privacy during toileting, nappy changing and personal care procedures will be respected, whilst ensuring appropriate safeguarding measures are maintained at all times.

17.7 We make sure that the appropriate statutory Staff:child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

For registered early years provision:

Where a person with a Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status,

Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of Staff for every 13 children.

Reception classes in maintained Schools and academies:

We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 Teacher per 30 pupils.

17.8 We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

17.9 We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

17.10 The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our School's child protection and safeguarding policy.

18.0 Monitoring Arrangements

18.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and EYFS Lead, or sooner should statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements or Trust procedures change.

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

18.3 Links to other statutory policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Policy and procedures
- Procedures for responding to illness
- Administering Medicines Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Procedure
- Inclusion Policy

Policy History

Date	Summary of change	Contact
Oct 2026	Paragraph 2.1 – update Paragraph 11.5 – New addition Paragraph 14.0 – New subheading Attendance Paragraph 15.0 – New subheading First Aid Paragraph 16.0 – New subheading Mealtimes and Food Safety Paragraph 17.2 – New addition Paragraph 17.3 – New addition Paragraph 17.4 – New addition Paragraph 17.5 – New addition Paragraph 17.6 – New addition Paragraph 18.1 - Update	Jackie Green

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