

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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Change History

Version	Date	Description
1	March 2026	New policy created to reflect the updates to EYFS statutory framework (2025) and Strong Foundations in the First Years of School (2024)

Linked Policies	SEND policy Teaching and Learning Policy Adaptive teaching policy Curriculum policy Assessment policy
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AWAITING GOVERNOR RATIFICATION

1.0 Policy Statement and Purpose

This Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy outlines the vision, principles, and practices that our primary school adheres to in order to provide high-quality education, following the 2014 National Curriculum guidelines in England and the Early years Foundation Stage Framework (2025). It is designed to create an enabling environment where all children can thrive and reach their full potential. This document aligns with the standards set by Ofsted and the statutory framework for the EYFS.

2.1 Policy Aims and Rationale

At Inkpen Primary School, we are committed to providing the highest quality early years education for all children in our care. This policy sets out our approach to delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), ensuring compliance with the statutory EYFS Framework (2025) the Childcare Act 2006, and all relevant legislation. Our aim is to create a safe, stimulating, and inclusive environment where every child can thrive, develop a lifelong love of learning, and achieve their full potential.

We recognise the critical importance of the early years in laying the foundations for future success. Our provision is informed by the latest research, best practice guidance, and the values of respect, inclusion, and partnership with families. We are committed to continuous improvement, ensuring our curriculum, assessment, and safeguarding arrangements remain robust and effective.

2.2 Scope of Policy

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to children from birth to the end of their Reception year (when they will be 5 years old). At Inkpen Primary School, this policy applies to our early years provision in Reception and any wraparound care for children within the EYFS age range. It covers all staff working with EYFS children, including teachers, teaching assistants, volunteers, and supply staff. The policy also applies to governors, parents, carers, and external agencies involved in supporting our early years provision.

3.0 Legislative and Statutory Framework

3.1 Compliance Obligations

At Inkpen Primary School, we are legally required to:

- Deliver the EYFS as set out in the statutory framework, ensuring all learning and development, assessment, and safeguarding requirements are met.
- Ensure all staff working with EYFS children have appropriate qualifications and experience, and that statutory staff:child ratios are maintained at all times.
- Carry out suitability checks for all staff, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, references, and ongoing monitoring.
- Maintain accurate records of children's progress, safeguarding concerns, accidents/incidents, and staff training.

- Complete and submit the EYFS Profile for each child at the end of the Reception year, sharing outcomes with parents and the local authority as required.
- Notify Ofsted and the local authority of any significant events, such as serious accidents or allegations of abuse.
- Provide inclusive provision and make reasonable adjustments for children with SEND or additional needs, in line with the SEND Code of Practice.

3.2 Alignment with National and Local Guidance

Our EYFS practice is informed by:

- **Department for Education (DfE) Guidance:** Including the EYFS Statutory Framework as well as non-statutory guidance "Development Matters" and "Birth to 5 Matters".
- **Ofsted School Inspection Toolkit:** Outlines expectations for quality of education, safeguarding, inclusion and leadership in early years.
- **Local Authority Guidance:** West Berkshire Local Authority provides support, training, and quality assurance for EYFS provision.

We regularly review our policy and practice to ensure alignment with the latest statutory and non-statutory guidance, and we are proactive in preparing for the implementation of the EYFS Framework 2025.

4.0 Principles and Ethos of EYFS Provision

4.1 Vision and Values

At Inkpen Primary School, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life. Our vision is to nurture confident, curious, and resilient learners who are equipped for success in school and beyond. We value each child as an individual and are committed to fostering a culture of inclusion, equality, and respect for children's rights. Our early years provision is guided by the Key principles of the EYFS:

- **A Unique Child** We recognise that every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. We understand that children learn and develop at different rates and in different ways and our curriculum and provision is reflective of this.
- **Positive Relationships** We understand that children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. At Inkpen, we work closely with parents to build strong links with home and school and develop strong, positive relationships with children, rooted in mutual respect.
- **Enabling Environments** Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs. We ensure that all curriculum areas are provided for within the environment, and that children's interests are taken into consideration.
- **Learning and Development** At Inkpen Primary School, we understand that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. We value all

areas of learning and ensure that our curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all seven areas of learning.

4.2 Child-Centred and Play-Based Learning

We are committed to a play-based, child-centred approach to learning, recognising that play is the most effective way for young children to explore, discover, and make sense of the world. Our curriculum is designed to provide a balance of child-initiated and adult-guided experiences, enabling children to follow their interests, take risks, and develop independence. Practitioners skillfully interact with children to extend their thinking, language, and learning, using open-ended questions and modelling positive behaviours.

4.3 Inclusion, Diversity, and Equal Opportunities

Inclusion is at the heart of our EYFS provision. We welcome all children and families, regardless of background, culture, language, or ability. We are committed to removing barriers to learning and participation, and to promoting equal opportunities for every child. Our curriculum reflects and celebrates diversity, and we work closely with families to understand and meet each child's unique needs. We have robust systems in place to identify and support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those learning English as an additional language (EAL), and children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

5.0 Curriculum and Learning

5.1 Curriculum Intent

Our EYFS curriculum is carefully designed to meet the statutory requirements of the EYFS Framework (2025) The curriculum is structured around the seven areas of learning and development:

- **Prime Areas:**

Communication and language

"The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively."
(Development Matters)

- This area includes listening and attention, understanding language, and speaking. Storytime sessions and interactive reading encourage vocabulary expansion and comprehension.
- Opportunities for children to engage in conversations, express ideas, and articulate thoughts develop their confidence in using language.

Physical development

"Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a

child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults." (Development Matters)

- Children develop both gross motor skills (e.g., running, jumping, climbing) and fine motor skills (e.g., using scissors, handling small objects).
- Structured play, outdoor activities, and movement sessions are designed to promote coordination, spatial awareness, and healthy lifestyle habits. We will encourage hand-eye coordination through arts and crafts, manipulative play, and sports.

Personal, social and emotional development

"Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others." (Development Matters)

- Children learn to develop a sense of self, an understanding of their feelings, and the ability to express them appropriately. Activities may include role-play situations, group discussions, and circle time to encourage sharing and discussing emotions.
- Building friendships and learning to resolve conflicts is emphasised, enabling children to develop empathy and social skills.

- **Specific Areas:**

Literacy

"It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing)." (Development Matters)

- Literacy development focuses on phonemic awareness, early reading skills, and the development of early writing. Activities such as phonics games, shared reading, and guided writing ensure children can blend sounds and recognise simple words.
- Children will have access to a variety of books and writing materials, fostering a love for reading, storytelling, and inventive writing from an early age.

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count

confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. (Development Matters)

- Mathematical skills include counting, understanding numbers, shapes, and spatial awareness. Practical activities like using counting objects, shape sorting, and measurement tasks will be common.
- Problem-solving and mathematical reasoning will be encouraged through relatable contexts and games that promote critical thinking regarding number relationships, patterns, and simple calculations.

Understanding the world

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension. (Development Matters)

- This area encourages exploration of the environment, cultures, and technology. Activities may include nature walks, experiments, and discussions about the world and holidays celebrated by different cultures.
- Children will engage in technology through age-appropriate tools, learning about different media and their uses to express ideas and solve problems.

Expressive arts and design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe. (Development Matters)

- Children's creativity is nurtured through art, music, dance, and imaginative play. Opportunities for children to explore different materials, instruments, and creative techniques will be encouraged.
- Role-play areas, music sessions, and art projects provide avenues for children to express themselves, communicate ideas, and collaborate with peers on creative projects.

We are committed to ensuring curriculum coherence and progression, as emphasised in the EYFS Framework 2025. Our curriculum is sequenced to build on what children know and can do,

providing rich, meaningful experiences that promote deep learning. We set ambitious yet achievable goals for all children, with a strong focus on early language, literacy, and mathematical development. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and adapted in response to children's interests, needs, and developmental stages.

5.2 Curriculum Planning

Learning in EYFS, sets the foundation for all future learning in Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and beyond. We begin using different schemes of learning, including PurpleMash, Monster Phonics, Kapow and White Rose in EYFS to support the transition from EYFS to KS1, preparing children for the next step in their school career.

Our curriculum has been designed to be ambitious for all, enabling our learners to flourish. It is coherently planned to allow children to build upon what they already know and carefully considers what children will learn in future years. When planning our curriculum, careful consideration was made to ensure it:

- has overarching topics based on our high-quality reading spine so that learning experiences can be linked to high quality texts, both new and familiar
- provides language rich opportunities where adults engage in high-quality interactions to support children's vocabulary acquisition
- supports children's interactions with each other and provides opportunities for social and emotions awareness
- focuses on foundational knowledge such as handwriting, spelling, maths fluency and reading
- regularly revisits skills and knowledge that have been previously taught and provides a range of opportunities for children to directly apply these in their independent and adult lead learning
- develops children's understanding and respect of a range of cultures and beliefs to ensure that our children learn to be tolerant and respectful of others

At Inkpen Primary School, our curriculum is planned for the year ensuring coherence and structure. Topics are planned for each of the six terms, based on high quality texts from our reading spine. All seven areas of learning are mapped out to ensure a broad and balanced coverage.

Both adults and child lead experiences are planned for and resourced carefully to maximise the learning opportunities within each experience. Children's interests are however always considered, and our experienced staff understand the need for children to follow their interests and take their own learning in a different direction.

Our environment is carefully planned and resourced in a way that is attractive, inviting and stimulating. This ensures that our learners are ready to explore, be curious, investigate and learn through first hand experiences. High quality interactions with staff, support their learning and help guide the children with purpose. All seven areas of learning are reflected in our environment which includes:

- small world play
- marking making area
- maths activities and challenges
- creative area
- construction
- computing
- manipulative, loose parts

- sand and water
- space for physical activities
- a class library

5.2 Implementation of Learning and Development Requirements

Learning and development in our EYFS is delivered through a combination of planned, purposeful play and focused adult-led activities. Practitioners use "Development Matters" and/or "Birth to 5 Matters" as guiding documents to inform planning, observation, and assessment. Our approach includes:

- Creating enabling environments, both indoors and outdoors, that stimulate curiosity, exploration, and creativity.
- Providing a wide range of open-ended resources and opportunities for children to make choices and take the lead in their learning.
- Using high-quality interactions to scaffold learning, extend vocabulary, and model positive social behaviours.
- Embedding routines and structures that support children's independence, self-regulation, and well-being.
- Differentiating activities to meet the needs of all learners, including those with SEND, EAL, or additional needs.

We ensure that all statutory learning and development requirements are met as outlined in the EYFS Framework 2025.

5.3 Assessment and EYFS Profile

Assessment is integral to effective early years practice at Inkpen Primary School. We use ongoing observation and formative assessment to understand each child's development, interests, and next steps. Practitioners record significant moments of learning, using a range of methods such as photographs, and annotated observations which form each child's "learning Journal".

Each term, children are informally assessed against our "Progression through Reception" document, with the first baseline assessment being carried out in upon arrival in Reception. Children are identified as being "on track" (OT) or "not on track" (NOT) against each of the seven key areas of learning. This assessment allows our staff to identify gaps in children's learning and plan accordingly to address these gaps each term. Our provision within the environment can also be adapted to reflect these assessments.

Regular checks are carried out to measure children's progress in phonics according to our chosen validated Phonics scheme "Monster Phonics". The information from these assessments is used to adapt planning, identify early support that may be needed for children who are at risk of falling behind and ensure that children are reading the most appropriate books from our aligned reading scheme.

At the end of the Reception year, we complete the statutory EYFS Profile for each child, summarising their attainment against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). The EYFS Profile is shared with parents/carers and the Year 1 teacher to support a smooth transition to Key Stage 1. We also use assessment information to identify children who may need additional support or challenge, and to inform curriculum planning.

We are committed to reducing unnecessary paperwork, as emphasised in recent EYFS updates, and to using assessment for the primary purpose of supporting children's learning and development.

5.4 Inclusion

Early identification and intervention are key principles in our approach to supporting children with additional needs. We have clear processes in place for:

- Observing and monitoring children's development to identify emerging concerns.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers to discuss concerns and agree next steps.
- Implementing targeted interventions and personalised support plans (with close support from the SENDco) in line with the SEND Code of Practice (2015).
- Accessing specialist advice and support from external agencies, such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, and health professionals.
- Making reasonable adjustments to the environment, curriculum, and teaching strategies to enable all children to participate fully.

We ensure that staff receive regular training on inclusive practice and that all children, regardless of need or background, are supported to make the best possible progress.

6.0 Safeguarding and Welfare

6.1 Safeguarding Arrangements

Safeguarding is paramount at Inkpen Primary School. We are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, in line with the Education Act 2002, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), and the EYFS Statutory Framework. Our safeguarding arrangements include:

- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) with responsibility for child protection across the school and in the EYFS.
- Robust procedures for reporting and responding to concerns about a child's welfare, including clear lines of communication and record-keeping.
- Safer recruitment practices, including enhanced DBS checks, references, and ongoing suitability checks for all staff and volunteers.
- Regular safeguarding training for all staff, including updates on current issues such as online safety, radicalisation, and peer-on-peer abuse.
- Clear procedures for managing allegations against staff or volunteers.
- Close working relationships with local safeguarding partners and external agencies.

We ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and that safeguarding is embedded in all aspects of our EYFS provision.

6.2 Health, Safety, and Wellbeing

The health, safety, and wellbeing of children and staff are central to our practice. We maintain a safe and healthy environment by:

- Conducting regular risk assessments of the premises, equipment, and activities, both indoors and outdoors.
- Ensuring that all staff are trained in paediatric first aid and that first aid kits are readily available.
- Implementing robust procedures for managing accidents, injuries, and illnesses, including clear reporting and recording systems.
- Promoting good hygiene practices, including handwashing, toileting, and food safety in line with the EYFS framework (2025)
- Supporting children's emotional wellbeing through nurturing relationships, consistent routines, and access to support as needed.
- Encouraging healthy lifestyles through physical activity, balanced nutrition, and outdoor play.

We work closely with parents/carers to support children's health and wellbeing and to respond promptly to any concerns.

6.4 Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships

We promote positive behaviour and respectful relationships through a whole-school approach that is consistent, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate. Our approach includes:

- Setting clear, age-appropriate expectations for behaviour, and modelling these through adult interactions.
- Using positive reinforcement, praise, and encouragement to support children's self-esteem and motivation.
- Supporting children to develop self-regulation, empathy, and conflict resolution skills through guided interactions and restorative approaches.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers to ensure consistency between home and school.
- Providing targeted support for children who may need additional help with behaviour or emotional wellbeing.

We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and seek to understand and address the underlying needs of each child.

7.0 Partnership with Parents, Carers, and the Community

7.1 Parental Engagement and Communication

We believe that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. We are committed to building strong, respectful partnerships with families by:

- Carrying out home visits to all our families in EYFS
- Welcoming parents/carers into the setting and valuing their knowledge of their child.
- Providing regular opportunities for parents/carers to share information, ask questions, and contribute to their child's learning journey.

- Offering a range of communication channels, including face-to-face meetings, newsletters, digital platforms, and parent workshops.
- Sharing information about the EYFS curriculum, assessment, and how parents/carers can support learning at home.

We strive to create an open, inclusive environment where all families feel valued and involved in their child's education.

7.2 Transition Arrangements

Transitions can be a significant time of change for young children and families. We have robust procedures in place to support smooth transitions:

- **Into EYFS:** We offer home visits, transition visits, and induction meetings to help children and families settle into the setting.
- **Between Settings:** We liaise with previous providers, share information, and support children in adjusting to new routines and environments.
- **Into Key Stage 1:** We ensure that assessment information, including the EYFS Profile, is shared with Year 1 staff, and we provide opportunities for children to visit their new classroom and meet their new teachers.

We recognise the importance of continuity and emotional security during transitions and work closely with families and other professionals to support each child.

7.3 Community Links and Multi-Agency Working

We value our links with the local community and work in partnership with a range of agencies to support children's learning, development, and wellbeing. This includes:

- Collaborating with health visitors, speech and language therapists, and other health professionals to support children's health and development.
- Working with local children's centres, nurseries, and childminders to share information and best practice.
- Engaging with community organisations, libraries, and cultural groups to enrich the curriculum and promote community cohesion.
- Participating in local authority networks and training to ensure our practice is informed by the latest developments and guidance.

We are committed to multi-agency working and to ensuring that all children and families have access to the support they need.

8.0 Review of provision and policy

8.1 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

We have robust systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of our EYFS provision. This includes:

- Regular self-evaluation against the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and EYFS statutory requirements.

- Analysis of assessment data to identify strengths, areas for development, and the impact of interventions.
- Observations of teaching and learning, with constructive feedback and action planning.
- Gathering feedback from children, parents/carers, and staff to inform continuous improvement.
- Preparing for Ofsted inspections by ensuring all documentation, policies, and practice are up-to-date and compliant.

Findings from monitoring and evaluation are shared with staff and governors and inform our school development plan.

8.2 Policy Review and Consultation

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if there are significant changes to statutory guidance or school circumstances. The review process includes consultation with staff, governors, parents/carers, and, where appropriate, children. We are committed to ensuring that our policy reflects the latest statutory requirements, including the EYFS Framework 2025, and the needs of our school community. Evidence of consultation and feedback is recorded and used to inform policy updates.