



| EYFS Policy |                  |               |               |
|-------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Reviewed by | Hattie Henderson | Authorised by | WGB Committee |
| Last Review | Summer 2026      | Date          | June 2026     |
| Next Review | Summer 2029      | Review Cycle  | 3 Years       |

## 1. Introduction

Freegrounds Infant School is a Rights Respecting school. Children and adults work together to recognise and act upon the rights of the child within our school, our local community and the wider world. We believe that by understanding their own rights children learn to respect and value the rights of others. This policy exemplifies these rights, and our practice aims to ensure that the following rights are adhered to:

Article 3 The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 28 Every child has the right to an education.

Article 29 Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

Freegrounds Infant School ensures equal opportunity of access to all children regardless of gender, race, religion, ability or disability.

## 2. Rationale

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Freegrounds Infant School, children join the reception class in the academic year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

We endeavour to ensure that children "learn and develop well and keep healthy and safe." We aim to support children in their learning through "teaching and experiences that gives children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2026

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

#### 4. Overarching Principles

The EYFS Seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early year's settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

#### 5. Areas of Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas", and four "specific areas".

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The specific areas are:

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

"The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life"

"The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning". \*(EYFS Statutory Framework 2026)

Our planning directly reflects the three statutory Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning (EYFS 2026): Playing and exploring, Active learning, and creating and thinking critically.

These are:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements; and

- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2026)

We aim to 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.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual learning journals. A physical Learning Journal Book captures independent evidence of progress across phonics, mathematics, and writing.

Child-initiated, play-based learning forms the core of our daily practice. Staff actively extend learning through targeted modelling, high-quality questioning, and responsive interaction. A mixture of whole class, group and individual teaching will be used by the class teacher and LSA to enable effective learning and progress for all children.

A system of 'plan, do review' is used before Discovery time (child initiated play based learning time). This is an opportunity for the children to think about their learning before, carry out their ideas and then reflect on their learning with their peers. This is based around three questions; Where are you going to go for your learning? What are you going to do for your learning? How is it going to help your learning?

Holistic assessment, incorporating insights from parents and previous settings, establishes baseline and ongoing developmental levels. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the Inclusion manager to access Special Educational Needs support.

Religious Education is also taught in the reception classes in accordance with Hampshire guidelines.

## 6. Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. At Freegrounds, the Early Years classrooms are organised to support all the different areas of learning.

The outdoor learning area provides experiences that cannot be accessed indoors and are based on children developing all areas of learning as well as effective characteristics for learning. Adopting this approach in Early Years continues from the high-quality provision the children will have had access to at pre-school and nursery. This offers a rich play and learning experience for children. It allows each child to progress at his/her own pace, it gives children practice in choosing, and in dealing with the consequences of choice, and it encourages a more flexible and open-ended use of the group's resources.

The Early Years environment is organised effectively to reflect this and provides the children with access to high-quality resources to support their learning and contribute to outstanding teaching and learning. The environment is organised as follows;

Indoor classrooms:

- Writing area
- Role play area
- Creative area
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- Investigation area
- Stimulating book corner
- Small world
- Calm corner
- Loose parts
- Construction area
- Sand or water

Outside area - We operate a free-flow indoor outdoor learning environment. The outdoor space mirrors and extends indoor learning.

In each of the different areas we have continuous provision, which is available for the children all year round, and enhanced provision, which is a specific challenge or activity. We change our enhancements each week. These enhancements are planned based on the child's interests, strengths and needs.

The outdoor learning environment is organised to give children the opportunity to develop in areas of learning in a hands-on practical way, which would not be possible to achieve in the indoor environment.

## 7. Assessment for Learning

Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners understanding children's interests and what they know and can do and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should make and act on their own day to day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

A meeting takes place after school on a Monday where the Early Years team get together to discuss their observations and feedback regarding the children's learning during the day. Following this meeting new learning opportunities are planned or modified to meet the needs of the children.

Progress is recorded weekly using whole-class assessment grids for core strands (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) alongside tracking for all 17 Early Learning Goals across the developmental cycles.

The whole class assessment sheet is updated regularly to give an overall picture of where children are currently working within the age band. The information on the assessment sheets will refer to direct observations of the child through child-initiated time and evidence of child speech.

Every Child has a Learning Journal which has any 'hard' evidence and any work completed as part of a guided group. There will be a balance between child-initiated learning and adult led activities. Each child will also have a Reading Journal in line with the school's English policy. One to one reading will be recorded each half term in the Reading Journal.

Phonics assessments identify which sounds the children can read and write. A whole class phonics tracking document will be updated each half term and kept in the EYFS class assessment folder to show progress for each child. During the Summer Term the child will be assessed using a phonics screening booklet, reading the first 20 words in the booklet to reflect the sounds that the children have been taught this year. This information will be recorded on the phonics assessment tracker, and a copy will also be given to the year 1 team in preparation for the transition.

At the end of each term, an assessment of each child's development will be recorded and then data will be produced for each class. The data will also include tracking of vulnerable groups, term of birth, gender and steps of progress. The EYFS Leader will then create a cohort report which will be shared with SLT and Governors.

## 8. Statutory assessment

### 8a Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

RBA is a short assessment, taken within the first six weeks of a child starting reception. The RBA assesses a child in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. The purpose of the RBA is to form the starting point for cohort-level school progress measures. Data from the RBA is compared to key stage 2 outcomes 7 years later to form the overall progress measure for a school. 2. The RBA is not used to make judgements about early years provision, either current or retrospective. It is solely intended for use within the primary school progress measure.

We have a window of six weeks in which to administer the assessment. This begins as soon as each child starts reception. The six-week period applies for autumn, winter and summer intakes, or any pupil that joins a school mid-term and has not previously taken the RBA.

The assessment can be carried out at any time within those six weeks, within the school day. The assessment must be administered within this window. The RBA does not have to be completed in one sitting and practitioners may pause the assessment at any time they feel is appropriate.

In some rare cases, headteachers may consider the RBA inaccessible to a pupil. In this case, disapplication may be considered. Disapplication is permitted for individual pupils who are unable to participate, even when using suitable access arrangements. Headteachers must make the final decision about whether it is appropriate for a pupil to take the RBA, and this decision should be discussed with the pupil's parents and teachers.

#### 8b - End of EYFS Assessment

During the final term in EYFS, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile reports for individuals and meet with the EYFS team. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

#### 9. A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

#### 10. Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with 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 Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

"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." (EYFS framework 2026)

Freegrounds Infant School complies fully with the statutory welfare requirements set out in the current EYFS Framework 2026.

- promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- 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

At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must always be on the premises and available when children are present and must accompany children on outings. At Freegrounds Infant School all our Early Years Support Staff have this qualification. This is renewed inline with official guidance

#### 11. Positive Relationships

At Freegrounds Infant 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.

Each child is assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents and/or carers. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

#### 12. Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transfer sessions;

A staggered, part-time intake during the initial 2 weeks supports a smooth transition, allowing staff, parents, and children to build secure relationships inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and again during the first half term of the child's Reception year in order to detail how we aim to work with their child

- providing parent workshops on reading and phonics, writing and Mathematics

- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: home learning, celebration assemblies, school visits, parent days.
- written contact through Reading Journals as well as the acknowledgement that parents can ring school to contact key workers (class LSA)
- by providing a quiet and confidential area where parents are able to discuss any concerns

### 13. Transition

#### 13a From Pre-school / Feeder settings

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition

- parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and allocation of classes and any concerns they may want to express
- the children are invited to two separate visits to their reception class. One of these visits is without parents

We collaborate with main feeder settings, facilitating transition visits tailored to the individual child's needs. children requiring extra support will have additional visits regardless of their setting and staff from Freegrounds Infant School may visit them in their pre-school setting.

#### 13b From EYFS Class to Key Stage 1

During the Summer Term a range of transition activities will be put into place such as timetable changes in EYFS in preparation for Key Stage 1. The children will also have the opportunity to spend a morning in their new classroom with their new Year 1 Teacher.

### 14. Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and their families are valued at Freegrounds Infant School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best, and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage, and the schools Inclusion manager is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Inclusion policy for SEN.

### 15. Screening Tools

After the term in which they are 5 years old we carry out three different screening checks at Freegrounds Infant School. These are:

- Speech Link – which assesses the level of a child's spoken language comprehension
- RAPID – identifies pupils with high, medium or low probability of dyslexia

- COPS – which can pinpoint specific areas of need and is usually taken by students who have a high probability of dyslexia. The test covers working memory, phonological awareness, phonological processing, auditory discrimination and colour discrimination.

Results from these screening checks are shared with parents.

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|  | V1 June 2026<br>Addition to positive relationships<br>Amendment to 13b |
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