

St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School

EYFS Policy



Approved: July 2026

Next Review Date: September 2028

1. Policy purpose and status

This policy sets out how the school meets the learning and development, assessment, safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children in Reception. It should be read alongside the school's detailed EYFS curriculum and the related whole-school policies listed in section 17.

Statutory basis: This revised policy is written for use from 1 September 2026 and reflects the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective from that date.

2. Equality and inclusion statement

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. We promote community cohesion and recognise the principles expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Every child is valued as a unique child made in the image and likeness of God. Our Catholic ethos, Gospel values and commitment to dignity, compassion, justice and inclusion underpin all aspects of our EYFS provision. We make reasonable adjustments and remove barriers so that children with SEND, disadvantaged children, children with English as an additional language and children facing other barriers can participate fully and achieve well from their starting points.

3. Aims

Our EYFS provision aims to:

- provide a safe, happy, nurturing and stimulating start to school in which children feel that they belong;
- deliver an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum that builds the knowledge, skills and attitudes children need for future learning and life;
- secure quality and consistency so that every child makes progress and no child is left behind;
- give high priority to communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, physical development, early reading, phonics and mathematics;
- combine purposeful play, skilful adult interaction, direct teaching and opportunities to practise, revisit and apply learning;
- identify additional needs early and provide timely, evidence-informed support;
- work in close partnership with parents, carers, previous settings and relevant professionals; and support a confident and well-planned transition into Year 1.

4. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the following requirements and guidance, as amended from time to time:

- Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026;
- Childcare Act 2006 and associated EYFS learning, development and welfare regulations;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;

- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Reception Baseline Assessment administration guidance for the relevant academic year; and Early Years Foundation Stage Profile handbook for the relevant academic year.

Development Matters may be used to support curriculum design and professional understanding. It is non-statutory and does not replace the school's own curriculum or professional judgement.

5. EYFS principles

Four overarching principles shape our practice:

A unique child. Every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive relationships. Children learn to be strong and independent through secure, warm and respectful relationships.

Enabling environments. Adults respond to children's interests and needs, provide appropriate challenge and build learning over time in partnership with families.

Learning and development. Children develop at different rates and learn through play, modelling, observation, guided activity, direct teaching and purposeful interaction.

6. Curriculum intent and organisation

Our curriculum reflects the school's Catholic identity, our local environment, the seasons and the wider world. Carefully selected, high-quality fiction, non-fiction, poetry, rhymes and experiences provide meaningful contexts for learning. Vocabulary is identified and taught explicitly, then revisited through conversation, storytelling, Talk for Writing, Mighty writer, reading and continuous provision.

Curriculum content is sequenced to build cumulatively from children's starting points and to prepare them for the next stage. Topics and themes are adapted in response to assessment and children's needs; they do not limit the breadth of the statutory educational programmes. Staff ensure a balance of child-initiated exploration, responsive interaction, small-group work and carefully planned direct teaching. Children have regular access to indoor and outdoor learning and sufficient time, resources and support to revisit, practise and deepen learning.

6.1 The seven areas of learning and development

All seven areas are important and interconnected.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional, Development

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

6.2 Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

Playing and exploring - children investigate, experience things and have a go.

Active learning - children concentrate, persist when difficulties occur and enjoy achieving.

Creating and thinking critically - children develop ideas, make links and choose strategies for doing things.

6.3 Communication, language, reading and phonics

Communication and language underpin the whole curriculum. Adults model accurate and ambitious language, sustain high-quality back-and-forth interactions, listen carefully and extend children's vocabulary and thinking. Children who need additional support are identified early through staff knowledge, appropriate screening and liaison with parents, the SENCO and relevant professionals.

The school follows Read Write Inc. as its systematic synthetic phonics programme. Phonics is taught daily by trained staff, using regular assessment to group children appropriately and provide prompt keep-up support. Children read books matched closely to their phonics knowledge and also take home books for reading pleasure. Staff read aloud frequently and promote a rich and diverse reading culture. The School Phonics handbook provides further detail.

6.4 Personal development, physical development and healthy choices

Personal, social and emotional development is woven through everyday routines, relationships, worship, teaching and provision. Staff teach emotional literacy, self-regulation, independence, resilience, cooperation and respect. The indoor and outdoor curriculum develops gross and fine motor skills, coordination, strength and safe risk-taking. Children learn about hygiene, oral health, healthy food, physical activity and keeping themselves safe.

6.5 Religious education and Catholic life

Children are taught by our tailored RED curriculum, pupils are encouraged to participate in age-appropriate prayer, worship and religious education. They learn about Scripture, the life and teachings of Jesus, the liturgical year and Catholic social teaching through stories, reflection, celebration and practical action. Children of all faiths and none are welcomed and treated with dignity and respect.

7. Planning and assessment

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning. Staff use their professional knowledge of each child, gained through observation, interaction, conversation, children's work and information from families and previous settings, to identify what children know, understand and can do and what they need to learn next.

- Assessment is proportionate and should not require long breaks from children or excessive paperwork.
- Practitioners are not required to collect physical evidence to prove every judgement.
- Planning is responsive to individual and cohort needs while maintaining the ambition and breadth of the curriculum.
- Progress and possible barriers are reviewed regularly by teachers, support staff, the EYFS lead, the SENCO and senior leaders as appropriate.
- Parents and carers are kept informed and are involved when learning or development needs are identified.

7.1 Reception Baseline Assessment

The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is completed for eligible children within the first six weeks in which they start Reception, in accordance with the administration guidance for that academic year. It is used for

national progress measures and is not designed to provide detailed diagnostic information or to label individual children. The school also draws on transition information and its own professional observations to establish starting points and plan provision.

7.2 Ongoing and summative assessment

Ongoing formative assessment informs daily teaching and targeted support. Summative information is recorded on the school's agreed assessment system, Sonar, at proportionate points during the year. At the end of Reception, teachers complete the statutory EYFS Profile for each child, judging each of the 17 Early Learning Goals as "expected" or "emerging". Judgements are based primarily on what practitioners know about the child through everyday activity, supported by appropriate internal and external moderation.

The EYFS Profile is shared with parents and Year 1 teachers. It informs professional dialogue about each child's strengths, development and learning needs so that the Year 1 curriculum can build effectively from the EYFS. Parents receive an annual written report and have planned opportunities to discuss progress and wellbeing during the year.

8. Inclusion, SEND and early intervention

All children receive high-quality teaching. Staff have the same high expectations for children with SEND while recognising that children develop in different ways and at different rates. Provision is adapted through scaffolding, visual support, accessible resources, changes to the environment, carefully structured routines, targeted adult interaction and specialist advice where appropriate.

- Concerns are discussed promptly and sensitively with parents and carers and APDR targets are set together to support pupils progress.
- The class teacher works with the SENCO to assess need, plan support, review impact and involve external professionals when required.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Children with an education, health and care plan receive the provision specified in the plan.
- Disadvantaged children and those known or previously known to social care are monitored carefully so that additional funding and support address identified barriers.
- Home languages are valued. Children learning English as an additional language are supported to develop English while continuing to use and develop their home language.

Further detail is contained in the school's SEND Information Report and SEND Policy.

9. Safeguarding and welfare

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The school provides a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which children's welfare, dignity and voice are central. All staff act in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS framework.

9.1 Safeguarding procedures

- Staff know the identity of the designated safeguarding leads, understand indicators of abuse and neglect, and know how to record and report concerns immediately.
- Children are supported to recognise feelings, boundaries, trusted adults and age-appropriate ways of keeping themselves safe.
- Unexplained or prolonged absence and patterns of non-attendance are followed up promptly in accordance with the Attendance Policy and safeguarding procedures.

- The school applies safer recruitment, suitability, disqualification, DBS, reference and induction requirements. From 1 September 2026, relevant enhanced DBS requirements for volunteers and the restriction on new employees commencing before the required check are observed.
- Allegations, low-level concerns and concerns about adults are managed under the school's safeguarding procedures. Required notifications are made without delay.
- Staff understand the whistleblowing procedure and can raise concerns about unsafe practice.
- Mobile phones, cameras, personal devices, photographs and online platforms are used only in accordance with school policy and data-protection requirements.

9.2 Attendance and collection

Regular attendance and punctuality support children's learning, relationships, confidence and sense of belonging. Registers are completed accurately and absence is followed up. Children are released only to an authorised adult, unless a lawful and agreed alternative arrangement is in place. Parents must inform the school promptly of changes to collection arrangements. The school follows its missing-child and uncollected-child procedures whenever required.

Attendance for reception pupils follows the same expectations than for the rest of the school, please refer to attendance policy for further information.

9.3 Health, medicines, first aid and accidents

- At least one person with a current paediatric first-aid certificate is available on the premises and accompanies children on outings, as required by the EYFS framework.
- Medicines are administered only in accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Administration of Medicines policies, with appropriate consent and records.
- Parents are informed of accidents, injuries and first-aid treatment by Medical tracker. The school meets its recording and notification duties for serious accidents, illness or injury.
- Individual healthcare plans, allergy information and emergency medication are accessible to relevant staff.
- Children's privacy and dignity are protected through agreed intimate-care procedures.

9.4 Food, drink and supervision while eating

Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. The school promotes healthy choices through fruit, milk and universal infant free school meals.

Dietary needs, allergies and cultural or religious requirements are recorded and communicated to relevant staff and school catering team. Children are adequately supervised while eating, remain within sight and hearing of an adult, and are supported to eat safely. Staff are alert to choking risks and follow the school's emergency procedures.

9.5 Behaviour and physical intervention

Staff promote positive behaviour through warm relationships, predictable routines, clear expectations, modelling, co-regulation and developmentally appropriate reflection. Please see the school behaviour policy for further information.

Positive handling is used only when necessary and lawful to prevent immediate injury or serious damage, and is recorded and reported in line with school policy.

9.6 Premises, risk assessment and outings

Indoor and outdoor areas, equipment and resources are checked and maintained so that they are safe and suitable. Risk assessment is proportionate and supports children to experience appropriate challenge and learn to manage risk. Staffing and supervision for visits are determined through a specific risk assessment, taking account of children's ages and needs. Written parental permission is obtained where required.

9.7 Screen use and online safety

From 1 September 2026, the school has regard to the DfE guidance on children's screen use in early years settings. Screens are used sparingly, intentionally and only where they add clear educational value or improve access. Screen use does not replace active play, talk, shared reading, physical activity, creative exploration or high-quality adult interaction. Content is age appropriate, staff supervise use, and filtering, monitoring, privacy and online-safety arrangements follow whole-school policy.

9.8 Safer sleep

Reception does not ordinarily provide sleeping arrangements. If an individual child requires rest or sleep for medical or welfare reasons, a specific plan and risk assessment will be agreed with parents and relevant professionals, regarding the safer-sleep requirements of the EYFS.

9.9 Dogs on School Premises

In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework effective from 1 September 2026, the school will not provide registered early years childcare on any premises where a banned dog breed is kept or otherwise present. The school recognises its responsibility to safeguard children from potential risks associated with dogs on the premises and will ensure that this requirement is always followed.

Any authorised dogs permitted on the wider school site during the school day, such as assistance or appropriately risk-assessed therapy dogs, will be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding, health and safety, and risk-assessment procedures.

10. Partnership with parents and carers

Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. Respectful, two-way communication enables staff and families to share knowledge, celebrate progress, identify concerns early and agree practical support.

- contact and information-sharing before a child starts school;
- visits or communication with previous early years settings;
- welcome meetings, transition information, stay-and-play sessions and visits;
- phonics, reading and curriculum workshops;
- regular newsletters, reading records and agreed digital communication platforms;
- planned parent-teacher consultations and an annual written report;
- timely discussion whenever staff or parents have concerns about wellbeing, attendance, learning or development;
- invitations to worship, celebrations, performances, sports events and other school activities;

Information is communicated in ways that are accessible to families, with translation, visual information, telephone or face-to-face discussion used where appropriate. Personal information is handled in accordance with the school's privacy notices and data-protection policies.

11. Transition into Reception and class organisation

Transition is planned around the needs of each child and family. The school gathers information from parents, carers, nurseries, preschools and relevant professionals; offers opportunities to meet staff and become familiar with the environment; and shares practical information about routines, learning, attendance and support. Enhanced transition is arranged for children with SEND, medical needs, safeguarding concerns, anxiety or other vulnerabilities. Any phased or adjusted start is individually justified, time limited, regularly reviewed and agreed with parents and relevant professionals.

Currently we have two reception classes, each class have 30 pupils, and they are led by an experienced EYFS lead and two qualified teachers and also supported by appropriately deployed teaching assistants. The school meets the statutory requirements for staffing qualifications, ratios and supervision. In Reception classes where most children will reach the age of five or older within the school year, class size legislation applies and classes do not normally exceed 30 pupils per school teacher, subject to permitted exceptions.

- Staffing decisions take account of the number, age and individual needs of children, the activity and the environment.
- Staff receive induction, supervision, training and continuing professional development appropriate to their roles.
- The class teacher and supporting practitioners fulfil the key-person function by building secure relationships, understanding individual needs and providing a consistent point of contact for families.
- Additional adults and specialist teachers are briefed about EYFS expectations, safeguarding and individual needs.

12. Daily organisation

- Reception children may arrive at their classroom from 8:40 am and are collected at 3:15 pm.
- Reception pupils could also access to the free breakfast school offer and arrive at 8:10 am, prior booking. School only offers breakfast club for Reception pupils after the first six week of the autumn term, if parents need to request this offer earlier, they will need to speak to the EYFS lead or class teachers.
- Lunchtime is from 12:15 am to 13:15 pm.
- Reception children participate in age-appropriate whole-school assemblies, worship and events.
- Specialist provision, including PE and music, is delivered by appropriately briefed staff.
- After-school opportunities are offered in line with school arrangements and children's needs after Autumn term.

Operational times and arrangements may be updated by the school; current information provided to parents takes precedence if changes are made.

13. Transition to Year 1

Reception and Year 1 teachers work together throughout the summer term to promote continuity. Children become familiar with their new teachers, classroom and routines. Staff share the EYFS Profile, curriculum information, phonics and reading information, strengths, interests, welfare information, SEND provision and effective strategies. Year 1 teaching builds from the EYFS and responds to children's developmental needs; transition does not require Reception practice to become formal during the transition period.

14. Complaints and concerns

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise questions or concerns promptly with the class teacher or EYFS lead so that issues can be understood and resolved. Formal complaints are managed through the school's Complaints Policy. Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately through the school's safeguarding procedures and are not delayed by the complaints process.

15. Monitoring, leadership and review

All staff working in Reception are responsible for implementing this policy. The EYFS lead, headteacher and senior leaders monitor curriculum quality, teaching, assessment, inclusion, safeguarding, welfare and outcomes as part of the school's monitoring cycle. The link governor meets with the EYFS lead and provides appropriate challenge and oversight. Findings inform the EYFS action plan, staff development and the School Development Plan.

The policy will be reviewed annually and sooner when legislation, statutory guidance or school practice changes. Leaders will ensure that procedures and staff training remain aligned with the current EYFS framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

16. Related school policies and documents

- Detailed EYFS Curriculum and progression documents
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Administration of Medicines policies
- Intimate Care Policy
- First Aid and Accident Reporting procedures
- Online Safety, Acceptable Use, Mobile Phone and Photography policies
- Educational Visits Policy and EYFS risk assessments
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct, Safer Recruitment, Low-Level Concerns and Whistleblowing procedures

17. Key external references

- **Department for Education:** Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026.
[EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)
- **Department for Education:** Changes to the EYFS framework from 1 September 2026.
[Help for early years providers : Changes to the EYFS framework from 1 September 2026](#)
- **Department for Education:** Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- **Department for Education:** Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

- **Standards and Testing Agency:** Reception Baseline Assessment administration guidance.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-baseline-assessment-administration-guidance>
- **Standards and Testing Agency:** Early Years Foundation Stage Profile handbook.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-handbook>
- **Department for Education:** Screen use: help for early years providers.
[Help for early years providers : Changes to the EYFS framework from 1 September 2026](#)

Appendix A - Curriculum overview

The school's detailed EYFS curriculum and progression documentation remains the operational companion to this policy. It sets out the intended knowledge, skills, vocabulary, texts, experiences, adaptations and assessment opportunities within all seven areas of learning. It is reviewed regularly in response to cohort needs, assessment information, statutory changes and evaluation of impact.

The detailed curriculum should demonstrate:

- Clear progression from children's starting points towards the Early Learning Goals and the Year 1 curriculum;
- Identified core texts, rhymes, stories, non-fiction and vocabulary;
- Planned opportunities for purposeful indoor and outdoor play;
- The balance of adult-guided teaching, responsive interaction and child-initiated learning;
- Systematic phonics, matched reading practice and reading for pleasure;
- Mathematical fluency, reasoning and problem solving;
- Catholic life, religious education, cultural capital and understanding of the wider world;
- Adaptations and targeted support for children with SEND, disadvantaged children, children with EAL and those at risk of falling behind;
- How assessment informs teaching without generating unnecessary workload; and
How the characteristics of effective teaching and learning are promoted across provision.