

Applecroft School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Person Responsible:	Early Years Phase Leader
Review Cycle:	Annual
Date of Issue:	June 2026
Review Date:	June 2027

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

1) Introduction & Aims:

School Vision:

'To be a positive and inspiring community that nurtures each individual and empowers leaders for life.'

School Mission Statement:

'Nurturing Potential, Inspiring Minds, Changing Lives'.

School Values:

- Ambition and Leadership
- Kindness and Supportiveness
- Respect and Honesty
- Determination and Resilience.

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the extensive 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 carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and antidiscriminatory practice.

The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being
- Communication and language skills
- Positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning
- Open and positive mind-set
- Focus and persistence
- Team-work and collaborative skills
- Building and nurturing relationships
- Spiritual development
- Physical development
- Reading and writing skills
- Mathematical skills • Understanding of the world • Creative development.

At Applecroft, we believe that Early Years Education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives. Children learn in a complex way and are influenced by everything in their environment. Children use their senses to explore and understand the world around them. They learn through play, meaningful real-world experiences and hands-on learning, through conversation with adults and other children and through a variety of planned experiences.

2) Legislation:

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory Framework (2024) for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The Early Years Staff strive to implement in practice the principles stated for excellent early years education:

- Effective education provision happens when children learn and develop in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships, with staff and family members
- Each child in the EYFS is assigned a key person (their class teacher). The role of the key person is to help ensure that every child's care and education is tailored to meet 3 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/carers
- Families and practitioners should work together to develop a strong relationship which children can benefit from
- To be effective, the curriculum should be ambitious, carefully sequenced and driven by children's interests
- Staff understand that young children do not develop in a fixed way, and that depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way. Through planning for the learning, and assessing and reviewing the development of each child, practitioners provide a curriculum that allows children to develop a secure foundation for future learning
- There should be opportunities for the children to engage in activities that they plan or initiate themselves as well as those planned by adults
- Practitioners must be able to observe and appropriately respond to children's needs and interests, to help them build their learning over time

- Well-planned, purposeful experiences and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process
- For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised, enabling all children to make good progress
- Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high-quality care and education by practitioners.

Equal Opportunities

We believe that children should be treated as individuals and have equal access to the Early Years Curriculum. All staff must have an awareness of equal opportunities, and the protected characteristics enshrined in the Equality Act 2010 and understand what they mean in principle as well as in practice. Practitioners plan to meet the needs of girls and boys, children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), children who are more able, children with English as an additional language, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, children from all social and cultural backgrounds and children of different ethnic groups.

Children with SEND are identified rapidly, and promptly receive the support needed to progress well in their learning. We are committed to achieving excellent outcomes for all pupils in our Early Years Foundation Stage.

3) Structure of the EYFS:

At Applecroft, the EYFS is made up of a nursery and reception class.

Our Nursery caters for both 15-hour and 30-hours. If children attend for 15-hours, the session will either run 8:30-11:30 (morning session) or 12:30-3:30pm (afternoon session). If they attend for 30-hours this session runs from 9-3pm.

Depending upon the hours they attend, parents can also purchase additional hours as follows:

- 15-hour attendees - can purchase an extra hour to allow them to attend the lunchtime session that runs 11:30-12:30pm
- 30-hour attendees - can purchase an extra 30 mins at either the beginning (8:30-9am) or end of the day (3-3:30pm). Parent may purchase both sessions if they choose to.

In Reception, the school day runs 8:45am-3:15pm.

4) Curriculum:

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

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. 3 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.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

5) Teaching and Learning in the EYFS:

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 interactions.

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 One.

In the Early Years, the prime and specific areas listed above are delivered effectively through playing and talking.

Effective learning involves:

- Children initiating activities that promote learning and enable them to learn from each other
- Children learning through movement and their senses
- Children having time to explore their own ideas and interests in depth
- Children feeling secure in the environment, and with the staff which will help to promote confident learners
- Children learning in different ways and at different rates
- Children making links in their learning
- Creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language.

At Applecroft, we believe that teaching is the process whereby children are systematically helped to make connections in their learning and are actively led forward to reflect and make use of what they have already learnt.

Teaching has many aspects, including planning and creating a learning environment, organising time and resources, facilitating meaningful opportunities interacting, questioning, responding to questions, working with and observing children, assessing and recording children's progress and sharing knowledge gained with other practitioners and parents/carers.

Effective teaching requires:

- Working in partnership with parents and carers
- Planning experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable
- Practitioners modelling and facilitating planned and purposeful play
- Practitioners who model a range of positive behaviour
- Using language that is rich and grammatically correct and broadening children's vocabulary through modelling and explanation
- Using conversation and carefully framed open and closed questions
- Direct teaching of skills and knowledge
- Promoting positive attitudes to learning through interaction and support
- Planning both indoor and outdoor learning environments
- Skilful and well-planned observations of children
- Assessing children's development and progress
- Identifying the next step in children's learning to ensure that all children make excellent progress.

The Value of Play

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is an important way in which young children learn. It is the process through which children explore, investigate, recreate and understand the world in which they live. It is a vital component of children's lives and is the medium through which skills can be developed and practiced.

The role of the practitioner is crucial in developing high quality play in the learning environment. This includes planning and resourcing a challenging environment, supporting children's learning through planned and spontaneous play, and extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

During Continuous Provision planning, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and exploring:** Children investigate and experience things and 'have a go' □
Active learning: Children concentrate and persevere if they encounter difficulties. They enjoy their achievements
- **Creating and thinking critically:** Children have and develop their own ideas, make links and connections between their play and experiences, and develop strategies for doing things.

6) Planning and Assessment:

We want to ensure that all children leaving our EYFS are ready to start Year 1 and fully engage in the curriculum. Each term is based around a series of core texts which are mapped out as part of our 'Literature Spine'. Each book focus does not last a specific amount of time but is based on the children's learning at the time and builds on their interests and fascinations. All the books have resources and activities ready to use in the enhanced provision.

Staff provide shared learning opportunities which excite, inspire and engage each child in their learning, and allow them to develop their unique and individual talents. At Applecroft, our curriculum is delivered through a mix of child and adult led activities, where adults model, support and scaffold the children's learning so that they develop the core skills they need. Our pupils will leave Reception having developed these core skills, and ready to move onto the next stage of their education, having secured the foundation needed for a lifelong love of learning.

At Applecroft, 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 carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts Reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

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

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.

7) Transition:

We have a thorough settling in process for all children before they start full time, this includes; pre-school setting visits, a parents information meeting in the second half of the summer term, stay and play/ story sessions, a home visit, one morning and one afternoon taster session before the children start full time.

At the end of the year, teachers and practitioners will meet and discuss the children transitioning to a new class. This transition time is extremely important and it is essential that the children are well prepared and parents have an understanding of the next step in their child's education. Transition sessions are planned for the latter part of the summer term.

We also host a meeting early in the Autumn Term for the new Year One parents so they can see the learning environment for themselves and understand the teaching and learning within the Year One curriculum.

8) Working with parents and carers

We recognise that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators and that in order to have a positive impact on a child's development and learning it is essential to develop a close working relationship with parents and carers, based on mutual respect.

The EYFS Team is always happy to talk to parents about any issues as they arise and communication between home and school is a fundamental to children's learning. We host Focus Child Consultations each term to discuss each child's progress, development and next steps in their learning. We send out a communication to parents the week before we meet for our consultation, to remind them of their child's focus week and to provide us with essential information and recent events which helps us as practitioners to reflect on the whole child.

In addition to this, every week we ensure our parents and carers are kept up to date with their child's learning and development. On Tapestry, we share a 'What are we learning in Nursery/Reception next week?' poster overview with learning intentions, our structured story and key vocabulary. We populate the learning taking place to allow parents to use these as pre-teaching tools and home learning support. The same posters are available to view in our classroom cabinets, outside Nursery and Reception. Reporting on the progress and attainment within the EYFS profile and characteristics of effective learning helps to provide parents and carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

9) Safeguarding and welfare procedures

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.

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:

- In Nursery, we have 1 teacher and 1 member of staff for every 13 children
- In Reception we comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils

We have key staff within the early years 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.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by using support materials provided by EC Publishing, as well as using community links such as Dental Nurses and resources from the Family Centre for example, by talking to children about:

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

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

10) Trustees

At Applecroft, our trustees attend a joint monitoring visits each term, where the EYFS Phase Leader reports progress made within their leadership through their Phase Improvement Plan (PIP), curriculum development and the next areas to develop.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Policy Review Committee. At every review, the policy will be shared with the board of trustees.

List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See Health & Safety Policy and First Aid Policy
Administering medicines policy	See Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Health & Safety Policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints Policy
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)	See Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

All policies are available on the policy page of the school website [available here](#).