



Beech Green Primary School

'Respect Achieve Belong'

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2026 – 2027

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Beech Green, children join Reception in the year that they turn five. We believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage encompasses all learning and is the basis upon which children build the rest of their lives. Everything we do in the Early Years is underpinned by the belief that:

‘All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.’ (**EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers – September 2026.**)

Aims

- To provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum that gives children the range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- To take into account the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in order to plan both enjoyable and challenging experiences in all areas of learning.
- To provide learning opportunities that are relevant and of interest to the children, and to also provide opportunities for learning to become embedded.
- To safeguard all children by following school procedures as part of our duty of care.
- To encourage all children to become effective learners by reflecting on and responding to their characteristics of learning.
- To ensure every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- To establish a close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

The following four guiding principles shape our practice:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**

- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.** This takes all children into account, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, which applies from September 2026.

The EYFS Curriculum

We provide an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

The prime areas are 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 specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied are:

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

Children are provided with a range of meaningful first-hand experiences in which they actively explore and think creatively. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We focus learning around children's interests. What interests the children is important to us and is reflected within our provision. We use observations of children's independent practice, their conversations and their responses to adult directed activities to inform our next steps in learning.

Principles underpinning teaching within the Foundation Stage

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.”

(EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers – September 2026.)

Play is a medium through which effective learning takes place and becomes embedded.

Play is central to our Reception curriculum. Through play, children develop their communication, social skills, creativity, problem-solving, independence and understanding of the world. Adults carefully observe children’s play and use their interactions, modelling, questioning and provision to extend learning and language. We recognise the importance of allowing children sufficient time to become deeply involved in their play, revisit ideas and develop their own interests.

It is recognised that learning not only takes place through planned play activities but also as a result of a child’s self-initiated play based on their own experiences and interests. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are directed by adults. As the children develop over the course of their Reception year, the number of adult directed activities will increase.

During children’s play, we interact in order to stretch and challenge children’s understanding further and also to model and extend vocabulary. In planning and supporting children’s activities, we consider the different ways that children learn and then reflect these in our practice. We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between both the indoor and outdoor classrooms.

We have developed our curriculum to give communication and language skills a high priority. The use of spoken language underpins all of the areas of learning and so it is essential that the children are exposed to a language rich environment where high quality conversations are modelled and become the norm.

High-quality adult interactions are central to our approach. Adults listen carefully to children, model language, introduce and explain new vocabulary, extend children’s ideas and encourage children to express themselves in increasingly complex ways. Adults use children’s interests and experiences as opportunities to develop communication, vocabulary and thinking. We provide repeated opportunities for children to hear, understand and use new vocabulary in meaningful contexts.

The teaching of reading is a high priority, alongside fostering a love of books. Books are used to teach topics and to enhance our whole curriculum. We follow a systematic approach to phonics teaching using the Read, Write Inc. programme.

Technology and Screen Use

Technology is used purposely to enhance children's understanding and learning. Screen use is carefully considered and balanced with many opportunities for active learning. Adult's model safe use of technology and ensure that high quality interactions, real experiences and play are not replaced by the use of screens.

Effective Teaching Strategies

Children learn in different ways; we support children to reach their full potential by considering the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

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.
- (Statutory framework for the EYFS 2026)

These characteristics are not assessed as separate areas of learning. Instead, we observe and support how children approach learning and use this understanding to provide appropriate challenge, support independence and develop children's confidence and resilience as learners.

The Environment

In order to maximise children's learning and development, we provide a language-rich environment where high-quality interactions are at the heart of our daily practice. All adults, including our 'Play Partners', actively support children's communication and language development by modelling and extending vocabulary throughout the day, particularly during 'Choice and Challenge' time.

We use the **ShREC approach** to support children's communication and language development through intentional and meaningful interactions:

- **Shared Attention:** Adults join children in their play, following their interests and focusing on what matters to them.
- **Responding:** Adults listen carefully and respond sensitively to children's ideas, thoughts and attempts to communicate.
- **Expanding:** Adults build upon children's language by modelling new vocabulary, extending ideas and introducing ambitious language in context.

- **Conversation:** Adults engage children in sustained back-and-forth conversations that promote thinking, reasoning and language development.

Children thrive through rich opportunities for open-ended play, exploration and collaboration. They are encouraged to work alongside their peers, share ideas, solve problems and express their thinking. Through carefully planned interactions and a language-rich environment, children develop the communication, language and social skills needed to become confident learners and effective communicators.

Time outside is essential; the children have regular Forest School sessions which allow the children to engage in energetic, risky and adventurous play with the support of adults.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. During the Reception year, we build a picture of each child's individual starting point through information from parents/carers, transition records, previous settings, observations, interactions and the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The RBA is one source of information and does not replace the professional knowledge that we develop about each child. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme and provision for individual children and groups of children.

We monitor the children's attainment throughout the year as to whether they are 'On Track' or 'Not on Track' against statements within the 'Progressions Towards the New Early Learning Goals & Beyond' document. Assessment takes the form of both formal and informal observations and through planned activities. Assessment is regularly completed and involves both the teachers, Teaching Partners and parents/carers. Assessments are used to inform future planning. As a Reception Team, we support the children to 'keep up, not catch up' in a variety of ways such as intervention groups, sharing targets with parents/carers, sharing next steps on Tapestry with parents/carers etc.

At the end of the year, children are assessed at either an emerging level or an expected level in each of the 17 Early Learning Goals. This information is used to determine whether a child has or has not reached a 'Good Level of Development' An end of year report is written which is shared with parents. This highlights the child's strengths and also areas for development. Assessments are passed on to Year One teachers to enable them to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Parents/Carers as Partners

We believe that parents/ carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make not only to their child's learning, but also the assessment of it. We work in partnership with parents/carers in a variety of ways including:

- Providing opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's Learning Journey throughout the year, for example, through the use of our online Learning Journal called Tapestry, parents meetings and our 'open door' communication.
- Regularly sharing Targets with parents/carers.
- Inviting parents/carers into the Reception Unit for either 'Stay & Play' sessions, workshops, parent's meetings or to look at work.
- Extending parent/carers knowledge by holding meetings on topics such as Phonics, Maths, EYFS. Also providing 'support' videos on Tapestry.
- Keeping parent/carers informed of their child's progress using Tapestry and by regularly sharing assessments.

Transitions

Carefully planned transitions are essential to ensure continuity of learning, we believe that children learn best when they feel happy and safe. As the children begin their Reception journey, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child, including other settings such as nurseries and childminders. Events such as family picnics and 'Stay and Play' sessions help to make school a more familiar, fun place, together with getting to know new adults. Setting visits allow staff to meet the children in their safe environment. Through meetings and phone calls, essential information is collected and shared, together with an opportunity for any questions to be answered and for vital parent/carer and teacher partnerships to be formed.

We work closely with previous settings to ensure that relevant safeguarding information is shared appropriately. Any previous safeguarding concerns are treated seriously and are shared within school on a strict **need-to-know basis**. Once a child is on our school roll, we liaise closely with their previous setting to obtain any further relevant information or detail to support the child's safety and wellbeing. All safeguarding information received is recorded securely on **CPOMS** and managed in accordance with our safeguarding and information-sharing procedures.

A well-planned transition into Key Stage one is also essential. Time is prioritised to allow the children to become familiar with their new classrooms and adults. This takes the form of, for example, story swap with their new adults, a day spent in their new class before the summer break etc. Relevant information about children's learning, development, communication, wellbeing and any additional needs is

shared appropriately with the child's receiving teacher to support continuity and a positive transition.

The safeguarding and welfare requirements

In order to promote children's welfare, keep them healthy and safe, and support their learning and development, we will:

- Provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment in which children can grow in confidence and independence.
- Promote children's good health, including oral health, support healthy lifestyles and take appropriate action when children are ill.
- Provide healthy snacks and drinking water while taking account of individual dietary requirements, allergies and medical needs.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers through clear and regular communication.
- Manage children's behaviour appropriately for their age, stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure that all adults working with children are suitable, qualified and appropriately trained.
- Maintain a safe environment, ensuring that premises, furniture, resources and equipment are fit for purpose and regularly checked.
- Follow robust safeguarding procedures to protect children from harm.
- Maintain accurate records, policies and procedures to support children's welfare and the safe and efficient management of the setting.

The children's safety and welfare is of paramount importance to us. Our curriculum teaches children about making safe choices and assessing risks. By encouraging the children to take risks, we are able to teach them how to recognise and avoid hazards in order to keep themselves safe. The children are taught about boundaries and rules and the need for them. Not only do we promote the good health of the children in our care, we actively teach the children why it is important to make healthy choices with regards to their physical and mental well being. This is undertaken in numerous ways eg: water is available throughout the day and healthy snacks are offered. The children are encouraged to become more aware of their physical needs and are encouraged to become more independent when accessing the toilets. The children are encouraged to regularly wash their hands. Set procedures are followed when children have an accident or become ill.

Children are appropriately supervised when eating and drinking. Staff follow school procedures relating to allergies, dietary requirements, food safety and choking prevention.

Although children do not have a planned sleep period during the Reception day, we understand that some children may occasionally become tired or need a quiet

period of rest. In such circumstances, we ensure that children can rest safely and comfortably when needed, with appropriate adult supervision.

Safeguarding and child protection are central to our EYFS provision. All staff follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education and the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework. All adults working with children must meet the school's safer recruitment and suitability requirements. Any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child are reported immediately in accordance with school procedures.

Special Educational Needs & Disability

We recognise that children develop at different rates and may require different levels of support to access the curriculum. Staff work closely with the SENCO, parents/carers and other professionals to identify needs at the earliest opportunity and provide the appropriate support. We adapt our provision by making changes to the environment, resources, adult interactions, scaffolding, grouping and teaching approaches. We have high expectations for all children, regardless of their individual starting points and aim to remove any barriers to learning.

As stated in the SEN policy

“Beech Green school values the contribution that every child can make and welcomes the diversity of culture, religion and intellectual style. The school seeks to raise the achievement, remove barriers to learning and increase physical and curricular access for all. All children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are valued, respected and equal members of the school. As such provision for pupils with SEND is a matter for the school as a whole.”