

Education South West

EYFS Policy

2026/27

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Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. Across Education South West, our settings provide high-quality early education that supports children from a wide range of starting points.

We recognise that a child's experience in the early years has a significant impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and stimulating start lays the foundation for children to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to lead great lives.

Our Early Years Philosophy

At Education South West, we believe that every child is unique and capable of success. We are committed to creating environments that are welcoming, inclusive and inspiring, where children feel safe, valued and motivated to learn.

We place equal importance on children's academic, social and emotional development, recognising that strong relationships, high expectations and carefully planned learning experiences are critical to children thriving.

Our Early Years provision fosters curiosity, independence and resilience, enabling children to develop a lifelong love of learning.

Aims

At Education South West we aim to:

- Provide a safe, stimulating and enriching environment where all children can thrive
- Ensure high expectations for all children, regardless of their starting points
- Foster a love of learning and curiosity about the world
- Support children to develop confidence, independence and resilience
- Build strong foundations in communication, language, literacy and mathematics
- Ensure children are well prepared for Key Stage 1
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to support children's development

Principles of Early Years Teaching and Learning

Our practice is underpinned by the four key principles of the EYFS:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

We ensure these principles are embedded across all settings through high-quality teaching, strong relationships and well-designed provision.

Learning and Development

The EYFS Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to ensure progression in knowledge and skills and to support children in achieving the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.

Learning is organised across the seven areas of learning:

- **Prime Areas:**
 - Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Communication and Language
 - Physical Development
- **Specific Areas:**
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Understanding the World
 - Expressive Arts and Design



All areas are interconnected and are not taught in isolation.

We ensure that learning is carefully sequenced and that children develop secure foundational knowledge before moving on to more complex concepts.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Across all settings, we promote the three characteristics of effective learning:

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience new things
- **Active learning** – children concentrate, persist and take pride in their achievements
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children develop their own ideas and make connections

These are embedded through our curriculum, environment and interactions.

Teaching and Learning

We provide a balanced approach to teaching and learning, ensuring that children develop knowledge, practise skills and apply what they know.

- **Direct Teaching** - Adults explicitly teach new knowledge, vocabulary and concepts, particularly in areas such as phonics, language and mathematics.
- **Practice and Consolidation** - Children are given regular opportunities to practise and embed their learning, ensuring accuracy and fluency.
- **Play-Based Learning** - Play is a vital part of our provision. It is purposeful and carefully planned to reinforce taught knowledge. Adults support play by modelling language, providing context and extending learning.
- **Stage-Appropriate Teaching** - Learning is matched to children's developmental stage to ensure all pupils can access and succeed in the curriculum.

Inclusion and Support for Vulnerable Learners

We recognise that children enter EYFS with a wide range of experiences and developmental starting points. We:

- Identify needs early through observation and assessment
- Provide targeted support and adult interaction
- Adapt provision to meet individual needs

All children are supported to achieve their full potential within an inclusive environment.

Assessment

Assessment in EYFS is ongoing, formative and integral to teaching and learning.

We use:

- Observations during play and adult-led activities
- Questioning and discussion
- Assessment of children's application of knowledge
- Identification of small steps of progress

Baseline assessment is used to identify starting points, and ongoing assessment informs planning. Statutory assessment at the end of Reception is completed in line with national requirements.

We recognise that not all learning can be captured through written evidence and value professional judgement and observation.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a crucial role in children's learning and development.

Our settings:

- Provide well-organised indoor and outdoor spaces



- Offer access to resources that support all areas of learning
- Enable children to explore, investigate and learn independently
- Promote language development through carefully planned interactions

Outdoor provision is valued as equally important, providing opportunities for physical development, exploration and sensory learning.

Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first educators and are key partners in their development.

We:

- Build strong relationships with families from the outset
- Provide regular communication about learning and progress
- Offer opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's education
- Work with wider services to support children and families, including in the first 1000 days

Transition

We place a strong emphasis on effective transition to ensure continuity of learning.

This includes:

- Supporting children as they move into EYFS provision
- Ensuring smooth transition between Nursery and Reception
- Preparing children for Key Stage 1

Transition arrangements are carefully planned and tailored to meet the needs of individual children.

Safeguarding and Welfare

We adhere fully to the statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS.

We ensure that:

- Children are safe, secure and well cared for
- Staff are suitably trained and vetted
- Environments are safe and appropriate
- Children's health, wellbeing and independence are promoted

We teach children about boundaries, safety and making positive choices.

Staff Development

High-quality professional development is a priority across Education South West.

We:

- Provide ongoing training and coaching
- Facilitate collaboration across settings
- Share best practice through Trust-wide networks

Leaders are committed to continuously improving EYFS provision.

Monitoring and Review

Provision is regularly monitored through:

- Leadership oversight
- Assessment and outcomes
- Quality of teaching and environment
- Trust-wide collaboration

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects best practice and statutory guidance.