

Thurlbear VA Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Date Agreed: September 2026

Date to be reviewed: September 2027

At Thurlbear CoE VA Primary School, the health, safety and wellbeing of every child is our top priority. We expect all staff, governors, parent/carers and volunteers to share this commitment to safeguarding our pupils

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2025 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The Reception year offers children their first experience of school life, it is important that this transition to school is a positive one for both children and parents. We believe that children's experiences in the Foundation Stage are crucial in developing confidence, health and well-being and a positive foundation for lifelong learning. Every child deserves the best possible start in life and we aim to provide the children with the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Thurlbear VA Primary School, children join the Reception class in the 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 are kept healthy and safe." We aim to provide children with the care, teaching and experiences that provide the foundation for good future progress through school and life. (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2025)

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.

We aim to promote and support key principles of the EYFS as described below:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.18). The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

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 positive praise and encouragement, as well as celebrating achievements to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Valuing all children as individuals and appreciate their uniqueness. Ensuring that all children and their families feel safe, valued, included and respected.
- Providing a safe, secure and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Promoting parents and carers as partners in their child's learning.
- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, vocabulary experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on the children's learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively.
- Provide children with the opportunities to play and explore, to engage in active learning and to think creatively and critically, planning and making decisions for themselves to foster independence.
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Ensure all seven areas of the EYFS are covered effectively and that planning is based on observations of children, their interests and their next steps in learning.
- 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.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEND)

All children and their families are valued at Thurlbear VA Primary School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their potential and planning is adapted to meet the needs of the children. 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 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 school's SENDCo is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Inclusion policy for SEND.

Positive Relationships

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 2025). We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

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 nurture our relationships with families 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 Stay and play sessions.
- Visiting children where possible in their Early years settings before they start their reception year.

- Supporting the children through the transition from pre-school to Reception with the children initially attending part time. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other, as well as the children.
- 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 and how they can support at home.
- 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. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress each term.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: stay and play sessions, celebration assemblies, special themed days, open afternoons, providing parents an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development.
- Using an online communication tool that parents can contribute to and communicate with Chestnut staff.
- Ensuring all parents know that their child's teacher and teaching assistants.
- We inform parents/carers about school routines and procedures in a variety of ways, including the school website, our school newsletter, starting school information packs, class letters and termly curriculum information.

Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure, and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. 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. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play, model and extend children's vocabulary and extend children as needed to further individual learning.

Learning and Development

Our Early Years class follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2025 statutory framework of the EYFS. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 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

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. 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 through the reception year. 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 SENCo in order to access Special Educational Needs support.

At Thurlbear VA Primary School: Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part 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. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners will respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Throughout the reception year, there will be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for Key Stage 1.

At Thurlbear, we support children in using 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
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.
(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2024)

Curriculum Planning and Assessment

At Thurlbear Primary School, we are ambitious for all children. Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. Practitioners also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Throughout our Foundation Stage, the curriculum is organised to enable children of all abilities to participate in a range of carefully planned adult led, adult initiated and child initiated activities. These take place every day in both the indoor and outdoor areas. The classroom and outdoor area in EYFS is set up in a way for children to carry out meaningful experiences to support their learning. Children are encouraged to seek resources to support them to be independent learners. This may be through using the displays in the classroom such as phonic sounds or selecting their own resources.

Adults in the room will skilfully interact with children during these child led moments to extend and develop their learning. The children are continually observed and assessed by the class

teacher and teaching assistant throughout the year. This in turn informs our planning in order to ensure all children make progress according to their individual needs.

Continuous Provision

At Thurlbear, we aim to ensure:

- A clearly defined learning environment designed to allow and encourage children to extend and deepen their understanding of the EY curriculum.
- An environment that facilitates independence, curiosity and hands on play based learning.
- That Continuous Provision enables children to explore recent learning, practice new skills and follow their own interests.
- Staff enhance Continuous Provision through careful intervention.
- Carefully chosen and organised high quality resources and experiences that are constantly available for children to access independently across every area of their learning.
- Clearly labelled resources for children to access independently.

Assessment

At Thurlbear Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe and interact with pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

We assess children by:

- Completing a baseline assessment in their first few weeks of school.
- Observing listening, interacting, talking.
- Noticing how they respond to each other.
- Valuing work, keeping samples, photocopies, photographs as appropriate
- Collecting information from parents and other adults.
- Highlighting specific skills.
- Looking at all aspects of development

End of Year Assessment

At the end of the reception year, the children are assessed against Early Years Goals. At the end of the year, teachers will assess using a range of evidence whether each child is meeting the expected levels. The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with all staff and parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers and with the year one teacher to support transition.

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."

At Thurlbear VA School we understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Ensure that at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings.
- 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 by ensuring we follow the safer recruitment and employment practices as stated in EYFS framework 2025. All staff will receive safeguarding training at least every two years.
- The school will monitor and follow up on prolonged or unexplained absences in accordance with EYFS 2025 framework and the school's attendance document.
- The school ensures they hold at least two emergency contact details for each child to ensure prompt action in cases of absence or emergency.
- 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.

Health and Safety

At Thurlbear, there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework, at Thurlbear we undertake:

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer." At Thurlbear a written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and informs the child's parents and/or carers on the same day." (Statutory framework for EYFS 2025)
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Meals, snacks, drinks offered are balanced, safe, and comply with allergy and dietary requirements. Children's' dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- Strict supervision is provided during mealtimes and snack times with paediatric first aid trained staff physically present in the room, seated and facing the children.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept. A member of staff with paediatric first aid training is on site at all times when children are present.
- A Health and Safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment.

- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy.
- Appropriate clothing. Staff are expected to wear clothing that supports them in getting to a child's level and playing and engaging with children at floor level.

Toilets and intimate hygiene

At Thurlbear we ensure:

- There is an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available.
- Any children who require support with toileting will have an Intimate Care Plan written by the SENDCo in consultation with parents and other professionals as appropriate.
- Children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting.
- There is an adequate supply of, spare clothes, and any other necessary items.

Use of the school's I pads and cameras

All members of staff have been given or have access to a school I pad for accessing Class Dojo

- School devices must only be used for work related matters
- School devices must only be used to take photographs with the consent of the child's parent.
- Staff must not take photographs of bruising or injuries for child protection reasons. Instead, recording concerns forms and body maps are used to record observations relating to child protection concerns.

Transition

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 gain information about the school.
- During the summer term parents are encouraged to complete an "All about me" booklet with their child.
- The children are invited to at least two separate visits to their reception class.
- The teacher makes visits to feeder settings. The number of visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition. Children are met and the teacher will speak to their key worker.
- Children requiring extra support will have additional visits and enhanced induction.
- If appropriate, a school entry meeting will take place with parents, staff from feeder settings and other professionals as appropriate.
- Children who need more support with transition may have a longer period of part time entry to school, which will be discussed with the school SendCo, Classteacher Headteacher and parents. Other professionals may be consulted if appropriate.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, 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 not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. 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.

The school does not provide care for children under the age of two and does not operate sleep provision. Therefore, statutory safer sleep requirements are not applicable to the school's current EYFS provision.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Healthy Eating & Food Allergy Policy
- Attendance Policy
- First Aid Policy
- SEND / Inclusion Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy