Rode and Norton St Philip School Federation

Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

Version	Reviewed By	Date Approved	Approved by	Revision Date
1.0	Georgina Muxworthy	November 2026	FGB	November 2027

Rode and Norton St. Philip First Schools Federation
Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy 2026.

1.Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in our school federation.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at our Federation schools. This is available to children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. These children are in the final year of the EYFS. In the National Curriculum this is referred to as the Reception Year, or YR.

In the policy the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS setting at our Federation we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS settings in our Federation is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2021). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes:

- Every child is a **Unique Child**
- Children learn to be independent and strong through **Positive Relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development** Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates

The curriculum is centred on **3 prime areas** of learning:

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

Providers must also support activities through **4 specific areas** which strengthen the prime areas:

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

Educational programmes which practitioners deliver in the setting must involve activities and experiences from one of the following seven areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

In our Federation, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

Underpinning learning in the EYFS are three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **playing and exploring** children investigate and experience things, 'have a go' and show they are ready to learn.
- **active learning** children concentrate and keep trying when encountering difficulties and enjoy their achievements, they show they are willing to learn.
- **creating and thinking critically** children have and develop their own ideas, make links in learning and develop strategies for doing things, they show they are able to learn effectively by applying skills learnt.

In our EYFS class there is a strong emphasis on the children as learners and how they learn.

4. Active Learning Through Play

In our Federation we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator, encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn and embed a variety of different skills and concepts.

In our EYFS setting practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities, inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play -based curriculum and pedagogy, as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

5. Assessment and Record Keeping

Ongoing teacher assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting in our Federation. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by the Early Years Teacher and is updated regularly through half termly checkpoints. This enables the EYFS team to monitor who is on track in their learning. Children who are not on track are identified and support given to enable them to meet their potential.

The main EYFS assessment methods are through practitioners working with and observing children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child -initiated play. They engage alongside children in their play, annotate children's written work and talk with children about their task or play.

Children's learning is captured with photographs and their voice recorded on their individual learning boards and in the class big book. Practitioners use their assessments to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Children's learning priorities are identified, and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Starting Reception
School-based observational baseline assessment is carried out during the children's first six weeks upon entering the setting. The school entry baseline also uses information from parents from the home visits, from the 'All About Me' booklets, as well as handover information from the preschool/nursery setting (the 'Moving On' document). The statutory on-entry Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is also carried out by trained staff during this time period. Judgments made on children's development are based on practitioners' evidence of children's learning observed independently and consistently across all Areas of Learning and Development.

End of Reception
In the final term of the academic year an EYFS profile is completed for all children. Each child is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

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

The profile is moderated in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. We submit our EYFS profile data to the local authority.

We share the EYFS profile with the child's year 1 teacher. This helps to inform a discussion between Reception and year 1 teachers about the child's stage of development and learning needs and helps to ensure a smooth transition into Year 1.

Parents receive a written report at the end of the year which states progress against the Early Learning Goals, as well as a personal comment of the child as a learner as assessed by their Characteristics of Learning.

6. Planning

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that follows the Early Years Foundation Stage. Development Matters (2023) and Birth to Five Matters (2026) non-statutory guidance documents are used as reference. This enables the EYFS teacher to incorporate the seven areas of learning and development into a stimulating, creative, cross curricular approach, ensuring breadth, but also following whole school themes, chosen by the whole staff, as the vehicle for their learning. Our whole school themes enable opportunities for each child to be inspired, to explore, to discover, create and to flourish.
Medium-term planning is created with all practitioner's involvement and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs. Weekly planning and enhancements follow the themes of the long and medium-term plans, but are also supported by observations of the children's learning from the previous week and are therefore responsive to the needs and interests of the children too.
All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting through the continuous provision. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child -initiated activities indoors and outdoors.

We welcome and plan in opportunities for visitors to come into school to share their experiences and expertise and we also provide educational visits within the local community and further afield to further support children's learning.

7. The Adults in the Early Years Team

Adults working in the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting with them and taking time to understand each unique child. They model and support children in forming positive relationships and friendships with one another. The adults use the ShREC approach to ensure high quality interaction.

All EYFS team members have access to continual professional development to maintain and extend their specialist expertise.

8. Parents as Partners

In our Federation we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents. This begins with Home Visits in Term 6 in the Summer. The EYFS staff team visit children and parents at home and work with the parents to gather crucial handover information. This is an important time for the children to bond with staff and develop trust.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through emails and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through emails, the learning board outside the classroom, informal chats and weekly 'what we are learning' updates in the weekly newsletter.

Parents are invited into school within the first few weeks of term to learn how we teach phonics. This is an opportunity for parents to understand the way reading and writing is taught and give them the knowledge required to support their child at home. It is also an opportunity to visit the classroom and gain an insight into their child's day.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another parent's evening takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress.
Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include end of year reports and Project-Based Learning 'Wow' days.
Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where

children show them their work and special events when the whole school is open to parents.
The school has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

9. Admissions and Induction
Our Federation provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. We have one Reception Class based at Norton St Philip. We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 children.

Before they start in the setting, all children are offered several visits during the Summer term. The purpose of these visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. If possible, practitioners will go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners to develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to school as smooth as possible.

In the Summer term parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. 'All About Me' induction packs will also be given out to parents as another way to support practitioners' knowledge and understanding of each individual child. Before starting in September all families are offered a home visit with the EYFS teacher and TA. This establishes strong connections from the beginning and an informal opportunity for families to share information and concerns.

From September children attend the setting in a staggered entry to ensure they all settle quickly and happily to our school. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.
See Admissions Policy for more information.

10. Paediatric First Aid (PFA)
We always have at least 3 staff members with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available when children are present, including on outings. The PFA certificate is for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the EYFS framework. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required. All practitioners working within the Reception Class are paediatric first aid trained.

11. Safer Eating
While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid PFA certificate (from a course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the latest EYFS framework). All children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating. Children sit down to eat their snack in the classroom before they go out to play, and they eat their lunch in the dinner hall sitting at tables.

Before a child joins our setting, we will get information on their:

- Dietary requirements and preferences
- Food allergies and intolerances
- Health requirements

We will share this information with all staff involved in food preparation and handling. We will make sure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis; the differences between allergies and intolerances; and that children can develop allergies at any time.

We will consult with parents/carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for their child – with the help of health professionals, where appropriate. We will also keep this information up to date and share it with all staff

In the event of a choking incident that requires intervention, we will record details of the incident and make the child's parents/carers aware. We will periodically review the records to identify whether we can change anything in our practice to make eating safer, and then take action as appropriate.

12.Oral Health

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general. In the early years we discuss healthy eating and looking after our bodies as part of our PSHE lessons and during snack time when we offer the children a variety of fruit/vegetables, milk and water.

13.Screen Time

We have regard for the DfE's help for early years providers: screen use guidance when making decisions about how and when children use screens in our setting. Use of screens is carefully planned and clearly linked to intended learning aims.

14. Equal Opportunities

All practitioners in our Federation have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting.
All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS settings at Rode and Norton First Schools Federation.
See Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.

15. Special Educational Needs

See Special Educational Needs Policy.