Duke Street Primary School
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Section 1: Vision, Aims and Legislative Framework

Vision
At Duke Street Primary School, we believe every child deserves the best possible start in life. We provide a safe, inclusive and ambitious environment where children feel valued, develop confidence, resilience and independence, and acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for lifelong learning.

Aims
Our EYFS curriculum is designed to provide a broad, balanced and ambitious education that reflects the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage. We build upon children's starting points through high-quality interactions, purposeful play, explicit teaching and meaningful first-hand experiences. We work in close partnership with families to ensure every child is prepared academically, socially and emotionally for Year 1.

Statutory Framework
This policy is implemented in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (effective 1 September 2025) and is informed by: Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026); Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition); Reception Baseline Assessment and Reporting Arrangements; SEND Code of Practice (2015); Development Matters (non-statutory); Department for Education guidance including Getting Children Ready for Reception and Excellence in Reception.

Legislation
Relevant legislation includes the Childcare Act 2006, Children Acts 1989 and 2004, Education Act 2002, Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR), Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and associated regulations.

Policy Links
This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour, Attendance, SEND, Equality, Online Safety, Health and Safety, Intimate Care, Medical Needs and Data Protection policies.

Intent
We have high expectations for every child. Our curriculum prioritises communication and language, early reading, mathematics, personal development and physical development while promoting curiosity, creativity and critical thinking. In line with Excellence in Reception and Getting Children Ready for Reception, we place strong emphasis on developing children's independence, self-regulation, executive function, vocabulary and positive learning behaviours through an engaging, language-rich environment.

Section 2: Our EYFS Curriculum

Intent

At Duke Street Primary School, our curriculum is ambitious, inclusive and carefully sequenced to enable every child to make strong progress from their individual starting points. It reflects the educational programmes within the EYFS Statutory Framework and is informed by current Department for Education guidance, including Excellence in Reception and Getting Children Ready for Reception. We prioritise communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, physical development, early reading, writing and mathematics, while providing a rich curriculum that develops children's understanding of the world and creativity.

Implementation

The curriculum is underpinned by the four EYFS principles: A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Learning and Development. Learning is planned through the seven areas of learning and development and is responsive to children's interests, prior learning and next steps.

High-quality adult interactions are central to our practice. Staff model ambitious vocabulary, extend children's thinking through sustained shared thinking, and use effective questioning to deepen understanding. Play remains the primary vehicle for learning and is carefully balanced with explicit teaching and purposeful adult-led activities.

Children benefit from a language-rich environment where stories, rhymes, discussion and high-quality texts underpin learning. Systematic synthetic phonics is taught daily using the school's chosen validated programme, alongside a structured mathematics curriculum that develops deep conceptual understanding through practical experiences.

Continuous provision is planned to promote independence, curiosity and problem-solving. Indoor and outdoor environments provide opportunities for exploration across all seven areas of learning. Forest School and first-hand experiences enrich the curriculum, supporting children's wellbeing, resilience, communication, physical development and understanding of the world.

Teaching is adapted to meet the needs of all learners, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those learning English as an additional language. Staff use ongoing assessment to inform planning and ensure all children are appropriately supported and challenged.

Impact

Children leave Reception as confident, resilient and enthusiastic learners who are well prepared for the Key Stage 1 curriculum. Through high-quality teaching, purposeful play and meaningful assessment, children develop secure foundations in communication, early reading, writing and mathematics, alongside the personal and social skills needed for future success. Progress is monitored through ongoing assessment, professional dialogue, Reception Baseline Assessment requirements and the EYFS Profile, ensuring that attainment and achievement remain central to curriculum evaluation.

Section 3: Teaching, Learning and Inclusion

Teaching and Learning

At Duke Street Primary School, we recognise that children learn best through warm, responsive relationships, purposeful play, high-quality interactions and carefully planned adult-led teaching. Our pedagogy is underpinned by the four guiding principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, and Learning and Development.

We provide a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed learning experiences. Practitioners use high-quality interactions, sustained shared thinking, ambitious vocabulary, explicit teaching, effective questioning and ongoing assessment to support all learners. In line with the Department for Education's Excellence in Reception guidance, practitioners have high expectations for every child.

The Learning Environment

Our indoor and outdoor environments promote independence, communication, exploration and problem-solving. Continuous provision is carefully planned so children revisit and apply learning across all seven areas. Forest School and outdoor learning support resilience, wellbeing and physical development.

Inclusion

Every child is valued as a unique individual. Teaching is adapted to meet the needs of children with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, children learning English as an Additional Language and those with additional needs. Staff work closely with families, the SENDCo and external agencies in line with the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Equality Act 2010.

Equality, Diversity and Belonging

We celebrate diversity through an inclusive curriculum that reflects the cultures, languages and experiences of our community. All children are encouraged to develop empathy, respect and a strong sense of belonging.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are children's first educators. We work in partnership through regular communication, consultations, workshops and shared learning opportunities. In line with Getting Children Ready for Reception, we support families to develop children's independence, communication, self-care and positive learning behaviours.

Key References

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (effective 1 September 2025)
- Development Matters
- Excellence in Reception
- Getting Children Ready for Reception
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Equality Act 2010

Section 4: Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of every child is our highest priority. Duke Street Primary School fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (effective 1 September 2025), Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026). All staff share responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and receive regular safeguarding training and updates.

Creating a Safe Environment

Children learn in an environment that is safe, welcoming and inclusive. Robust procedures are in place for safer recruitment, staff induction, supervision, risk assessment, attendance monitoring, first aid, administration of medicines, intimate care, online safety and health and safety. Concerns about children are recorded and reported promptly using the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff Responsibilities

All adults are expected to maintain high professional standards and follow the Staff Code of Conduct, safeguarding procedures and whistleblowing policy. Staff understand their duty to identify children who may be at risk of harm, including neglect, abuse, exploitation and the impact of domestic abuse. Concerns are reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Attendance and Wellbeing

Regular attendance is essential for children's learning and wellbeing. The school works closely with families to monitor attendance, follow up unexplained or prolonged absences and provide support where required. Children's emotional wellbeing, self-regulation and mental health are promoted through nurturing relationships and a supportive learning environment.

Health and Welfare

The school promotes healthy lifestyles, good hygiene, healthy eating and physical activity. Appropriate arrangements are in place for paediatric first aid, accident reporting, infection prevention and the safe administration of medicines in accordance with statutory requirements.

Policy Links

This section should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Attendance Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Online Safety Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

Key References

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (effective 1 September 2025)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Prevent Duty Guidance
- UK Health Security Agency guidance for education and childcare settings

Section 5: Assessment

Assessment Principles

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Practitioners use ongoing formative assessment to identify children's achievements, interests, knowledge and next steps. Assessment is purposeful, proportionate and used to inform teaching and provision rather than create unnecessary workload.

Observation and Formative Assessment

Staff observe children as they play, explore, communicate and take part in adult-led learning. Observations are used to identify what children know and can do, recognise emerging needs and decide how adults and the learning environment can support further development. Assessment is used to adapt teaching, revisit important knowledge, provide appropriate challenge and address gaps across all seven areas of learning.

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

The Reception Baseline Assessment is a statutory assessment administered in accordance with the current Standards and Testing Agency Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (ARA) and associated administration guidance. It is completed within the first six weeks of children starting Reception and provides a consistent starting point for measuring school-level progress from Reception to the end of Key Stage 2. The RBA is not intended to label individual children or replace teachers' professional knowledge.

EYFS Profile

At the end of Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed in accordance with statutory requirements. Practitioners make professional judgements against the 17 Early Learning Goals, drawing on a broad range of evidence from everyday learning and development. For each Early Learning Goal, children are assessed as either 'expected' or 'emerging'. Parents and carers receive information about their child's outcomes and opportunities to discuss progress.

Moderation and Transition

Assessment judgements are supported through professional dialogue within the EYFS team and appropriate moderation activity. End-of-Reception assessment information is shared with Year 1 staff so that transition builds on children's strengths, knowledge, skills and identified areas for further development.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The EYFS Lead and senior leaders monitor assessment practice to ensure it is accurate, manageable and supports high-quality teaching. Assessment information is used to evaluate curriculum effectiveness, identify children or groups requiring additional support and inform school improvement. No single assessment measure is used in isolation to judge a child's overall development.

Key References

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (effective from 1 September 2025)
- Reception Baseline Assessment: current Standards and Testing Agency Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (ARA) and administration guidance
- EYFS Profile: current statutory handbook and assessment guidance

- Development Matters (non-statutory curriculum guidance)
- Excellence in Reception (Department for Education)

Section 6: Partnership with Parents and Transition

At Duke Street Primary School, strong relationships between children, families, early years providers and school staff are central to a successful start to Reception. Transition is positive, inclusive and joined-up, and is viewed as a process rather than a single event.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. We build respectful, two-way relationships so families are valued as partners in learning, development and wellbeing.
Provide clear, accessible and regular communication about children's learning, wellbeing, routines and progress.
Invite families to share information about children's interests, strengths, experiences, friendships, communication and needs.
Encourage learning at home through everyday talk, stories, songs, play, practical independence and shared experiences.
Provide opportunities for parents and carers to meet staff, ask questions, contribute information and celebrate achievements.
Work sensitively with families where attendance, wellbeing, development or additional needs may affect a child' experience of school.

Transition into Reception

We follow the Department for Education's 2026 guidance, Getting children ready for reception: supporting effective transition.
Transition is planned early and helps every child feel safe, confident, known and ready to learn.
Make early contact with families and, where possible, the child's current early years provider.
Offer opportunities for children and families to become familiar with the school, staff, routines and environment through our Stepping Stones sessions.
Use reciprocal visits, transition events, stay-and-play opportunities and other activities to build familiarity.
Share simple information and resources that help children recognise the people, places and routines they will encounter.
Listen to children's and families' views and use these to inform transition planning.
Plan additional support where a child may find the transition particularly challenging.

Supporting School Readiness

We understand school readiness as the confidence, communication, independence and everyday skills that help children participate successfully in school. It is not a narrow academic checklist, and no child is expected to have mastered every skill before starting.
Communicating needs, ideas and feelings and asking for help.
Listening and responding to short instructions and joining conversations, stories and songs.
Developing independence with toileting, handwashing, dressing, eating and managing belongings, as appropriate.
Taking turns, sharing, cooperating and beginning to manage relationships with other children.
Developing confidence with familiar routines and trying new experiences.
Enjoying books, rhymes, talk, play, drawing, mark-making, counting and practical problem-solving.

Partnership with Early Years Providers

We aim to maintain strong, year-round partnership working with nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. Meaningful information sharing supports continuity and helps teachers understand each child as an individual.

Where appropriate, arrange communication or visits with the child's previous setting.

Share and receive meaningful information about interests, strengths, communication and language, friendships, learning and development.

Discuss established routines, successful approaches and strategies that help the child participate and thrive.

Use transition information to inform classroom organisation, relationships, provision and early teaching priorities.

Maintain confidentiality and share information in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

Individualised Transition and SEND

Children with SEND, developmental differences or other additional needs may require a more individualised transition. We work with families, the school SENDCo, early years providers and relevant professionals to identify needs early and plan reasonable adjustments.

Gather information about communication, sensory needs, physical development, routines, regulation, friendships and learning.

Agree practical strategies and reasonable adjustments before the child starts wherever possible.

Provide additional visits, visual information, familiarisation activities or other tailored support when appropriate.

Use a graduated approach and involve external professionals when appropriate and with necessary permissions.

Review transition arrangements once the child has started and adapt support in response to need.

Transition to Year 1

Transition continues beyond the move into Reception. Reception staff work with Year 1 colleagues to ensure continuity in children's learning and development. The EYFS Profile and professional knowledge support planning for the next stage.

Share relevant assessment information and professional knowledge with Year 1 teachers.

Identify children who may benefit from additional support or carefully planned transition arrangements.

Maintain appropriate opportunities for talk, play, exploration, practical learning and active engagement as children move towards Key Stage 1.

Ensure children experience a gradual, well-supported progression rather than an abrupt change in pedagogy.

Working with Other Professionals

Where appropriate, the school works with the SENDCo, health professionals, speech and language services, educational professionals, social care and other agencies. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection requirements.

Key References

- Department for Education, Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers – applies from 1 September 2026.
- Department for Education, Getting children ready for reception: supporting effective transition (16 April 2026).
- Department for Education, Supporting a smooth transition into reception (16 April 2026).
- Department for Education, Excellence in reception teaching: content framework (2026).
- Department for Education, Early years foundation stage profile handbook (current edition).
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.

- Equality Act 2010.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- RISE support for reception improvement (Department for Education).

Review: This section should be reviewed annually and sooner where statutory guidance or school practice changes.

Section 7: Leadership, Monitoring and Review

Leadership and Accountability

At Duke Street Primary School, the quality of EYFS provision is the responsibility of the Headteacher, EYFS Leader and governing body. Leaders ensure that the EYFS is well organised, appropriately resourced and implemented consistently with the statutory requirements of the EYFS framework.

The EYFS Leader is responsible for:

- leading and developing the EYFS curriculum and provision;
- ensuring statutory requirements are understood and implemented;
- supporting staff to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence;
- monitoring teaching, learning, assessment and children's progress;
- ensuring provision meets the needs of all children, including those with SEND;
- working with parents, early years providers and other professionals;
- identifying priorities for improvement and contributing to school development planning.

The governing body provides appropriate oversight and challenge, ensuring that EYFS provision supports the school's wider vision and priorities.

Monitoring the Quality of Provision

Monitoring is an ongoing process designed to improve outcomes for children rather than create unnecessary workload.
Leaders use a range of evidence, including:

- observation of teaching and interactions;
- learning walks and review of continuous provision;
- children's learning and development;
- assessment information and EYFS Profile outcomes;
- attendance and participation information;
- discussions with children, staff and parents;
- staff reflection and professional dialogue;
- review of the learning environment and resources;

- safeguarding and welfare checks.

Monitoring focuses on the **quality and impact of provision**, rather than simply on the completion of paperwork.

Professional Development

Staff are supported to develop the knowledge and skills required to provide high-quality early education.

Professional development may include:

- EYFS and safeguarding training;
- phonics, early reading and early mathematics development;
- communication and language development;
- SEND and inclusive practice;
- assessment and moderation;
- physical development and wellbeing;
- transition practice;
- coaching, mentoring and professional dialogue.

Where appropriate, the school will make use of current Department for Education professional development and RISE resources supporting Reception teaching and leadership. The current RISE offer includes support relating to inclusive practice, effective partnerships, assessment and Reception improvement.

Use of Assessment and Data

Assessment information is used to understand children's learning and development, identify strengths and gaps, and inform teaching.

Leaders review assessment information to:

- identify children who may require additional support;
- consider the progress of different groups of children;
- evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and teaching;
- inform professional discussion and planning;
- identify priorities for improvement.

Data is not used in isolation. Professional knowledge, observation and an understanding of each child's circumstances are considered alongside assessment information.

Inclusion and Equality

Leaders monitor whether all children are able to participate fully in EYFS provision.

Particular attention is given to:

- children with SEND;
- children learning English as an additional language;
- disadvantaged children;
- children with attendance or wellbeing concerns;
- children requiring additional support with communication, language or interaction.

Reasonable adjustments and appropriate support are put in place where needed. Leaders monitor the impact of these arrangements and work with families and relevant professionals where appropriate.

Self-Evaluation and Improvement

The EYFS is included within the school's wider self-evaluation and improvement planning.
Leaders consider:

1. **What are children learning and experiencing?**
2. **How effectively are adults supporting this learning?**
3. **Which children may not be benefiting fully from the provision?**
4. **What does assessment and professional knowledge tell us?**
5. **What should we improve next?**

Actions are proportionate, evidence-informed and focused on improving children's experiences and outcomes.
The current DfE Reception improvement offer encourages schools to use evidence and contextual information, including EYFS Profile outcomes and trends across pupil groups, to identify strengths and areas for development.

Policy Review

This EYFS policy will be reviewed **annually**, or sooner if there are significant changes to statutory requirements, national guidance or school practice.
The current EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers came into force on **1 September 2026**. Leaders will ensure that future revisions of the policy reflect any subsequent statutory changes.
The policy will be approved through the school's established governance arrangements and communicated to relevant staff.

Key References

- Department for Education, **Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers**, effective from 1 September 2026.
- Department for Education, **Early years foundation stage profile handbook**.
- Department for Education, **Excellence in reception teaching: content framework**.
- Department for Education, **Getting children ready for reception: supporting effective transition**.
- Department for Education, **RISE support for reception improvement**.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**.
- **SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years**.
- **Equality Act 2010**.

Section 8: Appendices and Key References

Key Statutory and Non-Statutory Documents

Duke Street Primary School's EYFS provision is informed by the following current statutory requirements and national guidance:

- **Department for Education – Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers**, effective from **1 September 2026**. This is the statutory framework that sets the standards for learning, development, safeguarding and welfare.
- **Department for Education – Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook**, current edition updated September 2025. This provides guidance for completing the statutory EYFS Profile assessment at the end of Reception.
- **Department for Education – Development Matters**, updated September 2023. This is non-statutory curriculum guidance which supports practitioners in understanding child development and designing an effective EYFS curriculum.
- **Department for Education – Getting children ready for reception: supporting effective transition**, 2026.
- **Department for Education – Excellence in reception teaching: content framework**, 2026.
- **Department for Education – RISE support for Reception improvement**, updated July 2026. This provides professional development and improvement resources for Reception teaching and leadership.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children**, 2026.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education**, current edition.
- **SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years**.
- **Equality Act 2010**.
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR**.

Related School Policies

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Health and Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- First Aid and Medication procedures
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Educational Visits Policy
- Intimate Care Policy, where applicable

EYFS Seven Areas of Learning

The EYFS curriculum is organised around seven areas of learning and development:

Prime areas

1. Communication and Language

2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific areas

4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

The seven areas remain the foundation of the EYFS educational programmes.

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Children learn through three characteristics:

- **Playing and Exploring** – engagement, curiosity and willingness to have a go.
- **Active Learning** – motivation, perseverance and enjoyment.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – problem-solving, making connections and developing their own ideas.

These characteristics underpin our approach to play, adult interaction, continuous provision and curriculum planning.

Policy Review

Policy owner: EYFS Leader / Headteacher
Approved by: Governing Body
Review frequency: Annually
Next review: September 2027, or earlier if statutory requirements change.

Duke Street Primary School is committed to providing every child with a strong, inclusive and positive foundation for lifelong learning.