



HEAP BRIDGE VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Working together, learning together"

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Headteacher

Mr. M. Cockcroft

September 2026

BE POSITIVE

BE PROACTIVE

BE PROUD

HEAP BRIDGE VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Policy

EYFS Aims and Principles

At Heap Bridge Primary School, we are committed to providing a high-quality Early Years education that lays secure foundations for lifelong learning. Our Reception provision supports children in becoming confident, independent and resilient learners, while fostering a lifelong love of learning, including through our Forest School provision which promotes outdoor learning, exploration and resilience.

We aim to ensure that all children:

- Access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that equips them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for future learning and later life
- Experience high-quality, consistent teaching and learning, enabling every child to make strong progress from their starting points and ensuring that no child is left behind
- Develop strong communication, language and social skills
- Grow in independence, curiosity and resilience
- Are well prepared for a successful transition into Key Stage 1
- Benefit from strong partnerships between staff, parents and carers to support learning, development and wellbeing
- Are fully included, with equality of opportunity promoted through inclusive and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring all children feel valued, respected and supported

We recognise the importance of early development and provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment where every child is valued and encouraged to thrive.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2026)**. It should be read alongside the school's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*.

Our curriculum and practice are informed by the four overarching principles which underpin all learning and development in the Early Years:

- **A Unique Child**

Every child is recognised as a unique individual who is constantly learning and developing. We support children to become resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

- **Positive Relationships**

Children learn to be strong and independent through secure, warm and supportive relationships with adults and peers.

- **Enabling Environments**

Children learn and develop most effectively in environments that are carefully planned, stimulating and responsive to their individual needs. We value strong partnerships with parents and carers.

- **Learning and Development**

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. Our curriculum supports all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to make good progress.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In line with the EYFS framework, we actively promote the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**, recognising that how children learn is as important as what they learn:

- **Playing and Exploring (Engagement)**

Children investigate, explore and 'have a go', showing curiosity and a willingness to try new experiences.

- **Active Learning (Motivation)**

Children concentrate, persevere when faced with challenges and take pride in their achievements.

- **Creating and Thinking Critically (Thinking)**

Children develop their own ideas, make links in their learning and begin to choose ways to solve problems.

These characteristics are embedded across our provision through high-quality interactions, carefully planned experiences and a stimulating learning environment, enabling children to become confident, motivated and effective learners.

Implementation

To achieve our aims, we deliver our EYFS curriculum through the following approaches:

Curriculum

Our curriculum follows the statutory EYFS framework and encompasses the seven areas of learning:

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

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

The prime areas are prioritised to secure the fundamental skills upon which all future learning is built.

Baseline assessments are undertaken on entry to Reception to identify children's starting points. This includes information gathered from parents and previous settings, where available. Our curriculum is carefully sequenced and responsive to children's interests, ensuring clear progression in knowledge, skills and vocabulary.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching in EYFS is responsive, engaging and rooted in high-quality interactions. Practitioners:

- Use ongoing assessment to inform planning and adapt provision to meet children's needs
- Model and extend language to develop communication skills
- Balance adult-led teaching with child-initiated learning
- Provide opportunities for children to practise and embed key skills

Each child is supported by a designated **class teacher acting as the key person**, who ensures that their learning, development and care needs are met while maintaining a strong and consistent partnership with families.

Play is central to learning in the Early Years, enabling children to explore, investigate and develop understanding of the world around them.

Learning Environment

We provide a well-organised, stimulating indoor and outdoor environment that:

- Promotes independence and choice
- Reflects children's interests and next steps
- Encourages exploration, creativity and problem-solving
- Supports the Characteristics of Effective Learning

We place a strong emphasis on **outdoor learning**, making full use of our school grounds, including our dedicated woodland area, to enhance children's learning experiences. The outdoor environment is an integral part of our provision.

Forest School Provision

Forest School is a key element of our EYFS curriculum at Heap Bridge Primary School and provides regular, meaningful opportunities for children to learn within the natural environment. It reflects our commitment to developing confident, resilient and independent learners.

Children participate in regular Forest School sessions throughout the year, led by trained practitioners.

Our Forest School provision:

- Provides regular and sustained access to outdoor and woodland environments
- Promotes children's **physical development, emotional wellbeing and engagement** through active, hands-on learning
- Encourages **curiosity, creativity and problem-solving** through child-led exploration
- Supports the development of **communication, language and social skills** through shared experiences
- Enables children to develop **resilience and independence** through carefully managed risk-taking

Forest School follows a **holistic, child-centred approach**, recognising the uniqueness of each child and supporting the development of the whole child. Sessions are planned to respond to children's interests, ensuring high levels of motivation and engagement.

Adults act as facilitators, modelling language, encouraging exploration and supporting children to extend their thinking. Children are given opportunities to work collaboratively, developing teamwork, communication and self-confidence.

Forest School strongly supports the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**, as children:

- Show curiosity and willingness to try new experiences
- Persist and remain motivated when faced with challenges
- Develop their own ideas and strategies through exploration and problem-solving

Health and safety are integral to Forest School sessions. Activities are carefully risk assessed, with clear boundaries in place to enable children to explore safely while developing an understanding of risk and responsibility.

Forest School operates in line with the school's policies for safeguarding, health and safety and inclusion, ensuring that all children can access and benefit from outdoor learning experiences.

Assessment

At Heap Bridge Primary School, ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff regularly observe children in a range of contexts to assess their level of achievement, interests and learning behaviours. These observations inform both **objective-led planning** and **planning in the moment**, ensuring that learning experiences build on children's current knowledge, skills and understanding.

Practitioners use objective-led planning to identify clear learning intentions, while also responding flexibly to children's interests and needs through skilled interactions and in-the-moment adaptations to provision. This enables staff to extend learning, deepen understanding and maximise progress within continuous provision and child-initiated learning.

Parental contributions are valued and actively encouraged as part of the assessment process. These are gathered through the use of our online platform, **Class Dojo**, home-school learning journals and informal discussions with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day. This enables practitioners to develop a holistic understanding of each child.

Within the first six weeks of starting Reception, children complete the statutory **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)**, providing a starting point for measuring progress.

At the end of the EYFS, practitioners complete the **EYFS Profile** for each child. This assessment is based on ongoing observations and knowledge of the child and covers the **17 Early Learning Goals** across the seven areas of learning. Children are assessed as:

- **Expected** – meeting the level of development expected at the end of Reception
- **Emerging** – not yet reaching the expected level

The EYFS Profile is informed by the professional judgement of staff, drawing on observations, interactions and contributions from parents and carers. Outcomes are shared with parents through an end-of-year report.

Assessment judgements are moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools to ensure consistency and accuracy. EYFS Profile data is submitted to the local authority in line with statutory requirements.

Inclusion and Support

We are committed to ensuring that all children achieve their full potential. We:

- Identify additional needs at the earliest opportunity
- Provide targeted support and interventions
- Work closely with the SENDCo and external agencies
- Adapt provision to meet individual needs

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first educators. We:

- Share regular information about children's learning and development
- Encourage active involvement in school life
- Maintain open and effective communication

Transition

We recognise that effective transition is key to supporting children's emotional wellbeing, confidence and readiness for learning.

Starting Reception

We aim to ensure a positive and effective transition from pre-school and nursery settings into Reception. Where appropriate, EYFS staff liaise with and visit children in their pre-school settings, particularly those with identified additional needs. Practitioners work closely with nursery staff to develop a clear understanding of each child's strengths, interests and developmental needs.

Children are invited to attend **transition stay and play sessions in small groups**, allowing them to become familiar with the classroom environment, staff and routines in a supportive setting. We also take part in the **Rochdale Transition with Get Ready with Teddy programme**, supporting children's emotional wellbeing and helping them feel safe and secure as they begin school.

We provide **information evenings for parents and carers**, enabling us to work in partnership to support children in making a successful start to school life.

Transition to Year 1

We place a strong emphasis on ensuring a smooth and successful transition into Year 1. EYFS and Year 1 staff work closely together to share assessment information, knowledge of each child and effective teaching strategies.

Children are given opportunities to visit their new classroom, meet their new teacher and become familiar with routines and expectations. Where appropriate, transition arrangements are adapted to ensure all children feel confident and secure.

Our curriculum is designed to ensure progression from the EYFS framework into the National Curriculum, maintaining opportunities for play-based learning and active engagement where appropriate.

Measuring Impact

As a result of this provision, the impact of our EYFS curriculum is reflected in the strong progress children make from their starting points and their readiness for Key Stage 1.

Children leave Reception:

- With secure foundations across all areas of learning and development
- Having achieved a Good Level of Development where appropriate
- Demonstrating confidence, independence and resilience
- Communicating effectively and working cooperatively with others
- Showing curiosity, creativity and a positive attitude to learning

Children also demonstrate the Characteristics of Effective Learning by engaging actively, persevering with challenges and thinking critically.

Children benefit from enrichment opportunities such as Forest School, which further support independence, resilience and engagement.

Children demonstrate high levels of engagement and enjoyment, particularly during outdoor and Forest School sessions.

Ongoing assessment ensures that all groups of children, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, make good progress and that any gaps are addressed promptly.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Alongside high-quality teaching and learning, safeguarding underpins all aspects of our EYFS provision.

At Heap Bridge Primary School, safeguarding is our highest priority. We follow the requirements of the **EYFS Statutory Framework (DfE, 2026)** and whole-school safeguarding policies, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*.

We ensure that:

- All staff are trained in safeguarding and child protection
- All EYFS staff hold a **valid Paediatric First Aid (PFA) qualification**
- At least one member of staff with a PFA qualification is present at all times, including during educational visits and **mealtimes**
- Staff follow clear procedures for reporting concerns
- Risk assessments are in place to maintain a safe learning environment

Staff Mobile Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

Staff personal mobile phones, smartwatches, and personal recording devices must be stored securely during contact time with children and accessed only in designated staff areas or in the absence of pupils. Dedicated school-owned devices are used exclusively for capturing learning observations on approved platforms (e.g., ClassDojo). Taking photographs or recordings of children on personal devices is strictly prohibited.

Digital Technology and Children's Screen Use

We adhere to DfE early years screen use guidance to ensure technology use is purposeful, active, and strictly limited. Screen time for Reception children is capped at less than one hour daily, monitored by staff, free from advertisements, and used solely for educational enhancement. Children are not permitted to use screens unsupervised, and toys or devices incorporating built-in Artificial Intelligence (AI) are prohibited across the EYFS setting

Safer Recruitment and Expanded Disclosure Duties

All staff, prospective employees, and regular volunteers undergo enhanced DBS and barred list clearance prior to commencing work with children; supervised volunteers are no longer exempt. All workforce members and job candidates have an ongoing statutory duty to disclose any arrests, charges, cautions, or convictions that may impact their suitability to work with children.

Reporting Allegations of Harm

The school notifies the local authority designated officer (LADO) of any allegation of harm (or potential harm) made against any person living, working, or volunteering on the premises within statutory timeframes, adhering to the updated notification threshold for harm.

Banned Dog Breeds and Premises Safety

In compliance with EYFS welfare regulations, no banned dog breeds (including types listed under Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, such as XL Bully breeds) are permitted on school premises or EYFS grounds at any time, regardless of exemption certification.

Monitoring Unexplained Absences

We maintain rigorous attendance oversight. Unexplained pupil absences are followed up on the first morning of absence by 9:30 AM to verify child safety and wellbeing, escalating to designated safeguarding leads if contact cannot be established.

Health, Safety and Supervision

- Children are cared for in a safe, clean and secure environment
- Accidents and first aid are managed appropriately and recorded
- Hygiene procedures are consistently followed
- Children are supervised at all times, including during transitions and outdoor learning
- Intimate care is provided in line with the school's Intimate Care Policy, ensuring children's dignity, privacy and safety are maintained at all times.

Mealtimes

- Children are supervised by qualified staff
- A member of staff with paediatric first aid is always present
- Safe eating practices are promoted and monitored
- Children are supported to develop independence and good hygiene routines

Staff Supervision and Development

We recognise the importance of effective staff supervision in maintaining high-quality provision and safeguarding standards.

We ensure that:

- Staff receive regular supervision meetings to support professional dialogue and reflection
- Ongoing training and professional development is prioritised
- Staff wellbeing is supported
- Practice is continually reviewed and improved

This promotes a strong culture of safeguarding, accountability and continuous improvement.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with updates to statutory guidance.

EYFS Lead: Gemma Delaney

Review Date: September 2027

This policy has been approved and adopted by Heap Bridge Primary School.

Headteacher: Marcus Cockcroft

Date:

EYFS Lead: Gemma Delaney

Date:

Chair of Governors: Steven Tobias

Date: