Newton Village Academy

EYFS Policy 2025-2026

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The Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2025.

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

Our intent is to provide all our children with an ambitious, exciting, relevant and coherently planned curriculum, led by children's interests. It is designed to meet the individual needs of all our children, expanding their knowledge, social capital, cultural capital and key skills, whilst promoting a language rich environment. This is done by aiming:

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child, particularly disadvantaged children, a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences.
- To ensure all children build on and gain new knowledge to support future learning and aspirations.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.
- To ensure all children, particularly children with less vocabulary, experience a vocabulary rich environment through developing a love of reading and excellent role models.

Implementation -We encourage children to demonstrate their attitudes and behaviours to learning through the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning.

Our EYFS curriculum is designed to recognise their prior learning by providing first-hand learning experiences and allowing the children to develop interpersonal skills, build resilience and become creative, critical thinkers to enable them to challenge themselves. We ensure the content of the curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners and is taught in a logical progression so that children build on prior learning. We plan through a topic-based approach on an annual basis, but these plans are adapted and amended to address the ever growing and changing needs and interests of all our children.

We understand to maintain high standards of quality first teaching we must invest in our staff by providing high quality Continued Professional Development (CPD) to match the current needs of the staff and the needs of our children. All staff create an environment to match the needs and skill levels of our children and use their own teacher assessments and gap analysis to inform their planning and the quality provision.

We recognise that language and communication is vital in all areas of a child's development. We welcome children from culturally diverse backgrounds. Communication and language development are therefore a consistent focus. We support children's development by providing a rich language environment, where conversations, singing and sharing stories become a regular part of the children's day. In addition to Read Write Inc Phonics we have **'**core books**'** which we read frequently with the children. These books are re-visited again and again, on different levels to support language development. The children will develop language and increased vocabulary in addition to gaining a love of books and will become very familiar with these known texts so that they can remember and re-tell them.

We believe learning through play is vital, we use the environment to ensure the children's needs are met through continuous provision, enhanced provision and following their interests. Staff teach an objective through whole class, small group teaching and going into provision to observe children's play and move learning forward at that point. Learning is shared with parents through Tapestry, Seesaw and other social media platforms. Formative assessment takes place within every session and helps staff to identify any children that needs more support to achieve the objective and those that need challenging. This may be instantaneous if appropriate. We support the children's development, and our goal is to make sure our children are prepared for the next chapter in their school life.

Impact - The broad and balanced curriculum design ensures that the needs of individual children including EAL, SEND and disadvantaged, and small groups of children can be met within the environment of high-quality teaching. This is supported by targeted interventions where appropriate through direct teaching or play based learning. We endeavour for pupils to be ready and prepared for the next phase of their education. The impact of our curriculum is measured by assessment procedures which allow us to measure outcomes against all schools nationally. We measure the percentage of pupils achieving the GLD at the end of EYFS and place a strong emphasis on measuring children's progress from their starting points. The impact of our curriculum will also, in fact, be measured by how effectively it helps our pupils develop into well rounded individuals who embody our values and carry with them the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them lifelong learners and valuable future citizens.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The EYFS teachers plan activities within classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. Children are observed displaying these characteristics through observations and these are used as a transition document to have professional conversation about how a child learns. The three characteristics 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.

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. To do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also consider 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 and parents, where appropriate.

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find topics are a great way to spark their imagination. Our topics vary in each classroom from – All about us, Ice and Water, Marvelous Minibeasts etc. The topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes and local/national events e.g. Remembrance Day, Children in Need and many more key celebrations. Every term staff plan the next topic, and book visits and visitors that will enhance the learning and vocabulary of all children.

Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to. Plans are available for parents on the school's website and are summarised in the termly class newsletter. All Staff attend planning meetings and give an input whenever possible; these are held by the class teachers. Continuous Provision is also planned so that staff can support children in areas of the classroom through play. Our continuous provision plans are designed to support children in becoming efficient and eventually independent learners.

Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. We set aside times each day when the children come together, gathered on the carpet as a whole class. In these sessions we focus on our communication skills, topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, focusing their attention etc. Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, including traditional, modern classics and poems. We also understand the importance that reading and sharing stories play a whole role in gaining new vocabulary. From this we make sure there is always many opportunities, throughout the day to enjoy sharing books. From Nursery every child is given their own book bag and has a designated day when they will have one-to-one time sharing books with an adult. We also have a core book scheme to promote reading in the home and to support families understand the importance of reading. This scheme runs in Pre-School, Nursery and Reception, enables families to share books at home that children have experienced in school.
As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1

Assessment

Throughout our Trust, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Where settings have children who are **aged between 2 and 3**, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is used to measure how well schools help pupils progress from the start of primary school to the end of Year 6.

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters *guidance*) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Nutrition

We are committed to promoting healthy eating habits in line with the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework** and government guidance on nutrition for under-fives. We follow guidance set out in *Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance*
We recognise that good nutrition is vital for children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, and ability to learn and develop.
We ensure that:

- All snacks and meals provided are **nutritious, balanced, and age-appropriate**
- Children have access to **fresh drinking water at all times**.
- We actively **promote healthy food choices** through our curriculum, mealtime routines and role modelling by staff.
- Dietary needs, allergies, and cultural preferences are fully respected and catered for in partnership with parents and carers.
- Food is cut, where necessary, appropriate for the age of the child to ensure food safety following *Food safety advice on choking hazards in settings - Foundation Years*
- Mealtimes are seen as a **social, enjoyable, and educational experience**, encouraging independence and positive attitudes toward food.

We work closely with families to reinforce healthy eating habits at home and support children in developing a lifelong understanding of nutrition and wellbeing.

Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development, observations and achievements are shared through Tapestry, Seesaw, in person and during parent's meetings. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Home visits will take place, depending on the setting, allowing the staff to gain a more detailed insight of each child before they join. When a child starts in our Trust, parents are invited to attend a welcome meeting, during this meeting important information will be shared with the families. Early in the first term parents are also invited to a parents' meeting so the settling in can be reviewed. They are also invited to attend a Parents' Meeting each term and teachers are available most mornings and evenings to talk and to discuss more urgent matters.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance. All Trust settings follow updated staff ratios and the latest EYFS Statutory Framework.

We take all accidents seriously and always log them and take appropriate action. We encourage all children to start school toilet trained but will support any parent/children struggling with this. We follow whole Trust procedures for child protection, safeguarding and welfare procedures. These are outlined in our Trust policies.