



# Thaxted Primary School

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

<b>Policy Date:</b> Spring 2024	<b>Review Date:</b> Spring 2026	<b>Responsible Person:</b> Headteacher <b>In Conjunction with:</b> Early Years Foundation Stage Leader
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Thaxted Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults. This document should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy and our guide for new parents, which are available on our website.

In the EYFS setting at Thaxted Primary School 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.

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## 2. THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE FRAMEWORK

Teaching in the EYFS setting at Thaxted Primary School is delivered in accordance with the Government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (January 2024). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates'.

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas, which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. 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.

At Thaxted Primary School, as the children move through their reception year, the EYFS framework allows a natural progression and focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge that help the children to prepare for year 1.

### **3. ACTIVE LEARNING THROUGH PLAY**

At Thaxted Primary School, we recognise that play 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 and can be adapted to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at Thaxted Primary School, children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults, both in the classroom and outside. These activities are designed to 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.

### **4. STAFFING**

The staffing ratio is at least one teacher to every 30 children. Additional teaching and learning staff work with children to support their learning in the Foundation Stage.

### **5. ASSESSMENT RECORDING AND REPORTING**

The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out in the first six weeks in which the children start reception. Further judgments are made on the children's current stage of development during this period using assessment checkpoint statements to support these judgements. This builds an on entry assessment of their learning requirements and subsequent assessment throughout the year.

Ongoing assessment throughout the school day is an essential part of the learning and development process at Thaxted Primary School as it plays an important part in helping recognise progress, understand needs, abilities, interests and learning styles, and to plan activities and support. Through practitioners' observations of children leading their own play and in play guided by adults within different contexts, teaching and learning is adapted to reflect the children's knowledge and progress. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

A record of children's learning progression in all areas of learning and development is recorded in an online learning journal using Tapestry software. Parents have secure access to their own child's Learning Journey and are encouraged to contribute to it by adding their own photographs and observations from home.

At the end of the reception year, practitioners complete the EYFS profile for each child. Children are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development;
- Not yet reaching expected levels.

The results of the profile are shared with parents/carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

## **6. PLANNING**

The children's learning and development opportunities are planned using the 'Development Matters' document and EYFS framework as guidance to form long and medium term planning. Practitioners observations of the children's interests, current knowledge and skills, further shape the learning activities planned and are continuously adapted as a result of the observations made. All areas of learning and development are planned for and available to access within the setting throughout each week. The learning opportunities are provided through a mix of children leading their own play and by taking part in play and activities guided by adults both in the classroom and outside. We aim to provide rich and varied environments, both indoor and outdoor, which allow children to feel safe and secure yet confident to try new things and take risks.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield, themed days and visitors to the school are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom.

## **7. PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

At Thaxted Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents 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, through meetings and induction sessions at the start of the year, informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, the sharing of WOW moments through postcards and the use of Tapestry by parents at home. These opportunities are aimed at encouraging 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) and 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 a weekly summary of class activities sent home in the children's learning diaries along with conversations about individual learning achievements and sharing of information at the beginning and end of the day. Class Dojo also provides parents with another method of communication with the class teacher. Whole school newsletters are also sent home on a half termly basis.

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. Parent's evening during the Spring term focuses upon children's learning and development progress. In the Summer term, reports detailing their EYFS profile are completed by teachers at the end of the year, and are sent home to parents and passed on to year one teachers.

Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning and development parents take the form of 'Show and Share' sessions where children share their learning and achievements. Parents are also invited to get involved with school life helping with Forest School, educational visits, reading sessions, as well as offering their individual skills and knowledge (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning.

## **8. ADMISSIONS**

The criteria for admissions are located in our Admissions Policy, which can be found on our website.

## **9. INDUCTION**

Induction takes place during June and July. An information pack is sent to parents, which outlines details of the induction process and dates and arrangements for the beginning of term. Prior to the children starting school, they are invited to spend two afternoons with us when they will spend time in the classroom with their prospective teacher, and an opportunity to experience a range of activities that the children will experience when they start school. Class teachers will also visit the children at their pre-schools and parents are offered a meeting with the class teacher to meet the children and share important information prior to starting school. Parents are invited to an evening presentation outlining the key information about the school, the curriculum, day to day routines and how to help their children prepare for school.

The class teachers will liaise with local pre-schools in order to support the children's transition between settings. In order that the children settle into Thaxted School life smoothly and happily, they initially attend half days only, for the first week of the term. At the end of this period, parents are invited to a meeting that details the range and type of activities and experiences provided for children, how we teach reading, the daily routines of the setting, and how parents and carers can share and support learning at home.

## **10. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

All practitioners at Thaxted Primary School 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 setting at Thaxted Primary School.

Please refer to our school Equal Opportunities Policy on our website for further information.

## **11. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Please refer to the Special Educational Needs Policy on our website.

## **12. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Inspections of the setting are carried out on a weekly basis by the Site Manager and termly by a member of our Senior Leadership Team and a governor. Procedures for Health and Safety are outlined in The Code of Practice No.25, which is located in the school office. Please also refer to our Health and Safety policy on our website.