



St Thomas à Becket Primary School

Roots to grow, wings to fly.

"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed...nothing is impossible for you."

Matthew 17:20



Friendship | Respect | Truth | Forgiveness | Thankfulness | Perseverance

You only have one life, one childhood, one opportunity. School is one of the most important experiences you will ever have. At St Thomas à Becket we will stop at nothing to ensure that you are given every chance to succeed. Through our faith and wisdom, we will give you strong roots to grow into resilient, respectful and ambitious citizens. We will open doors so that you can imagine endless possibilities and a life without limits. We will give you wings to fly.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE AND PRE SCHOOL POLICY

Statutory	
Date approved	March 2026
Date published	March 2026
Approved by	Governing body
Reviewed on	March 2027
Next review date	March 2027

Introduction

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (September 2024). The EYFS sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes high-quality teaching and learning to give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for future progress through school and life. The early years are a critical period in a child's development, during which children grow rapidly—physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

At St Thomas à Becket CofE (Alderton) Primary School, our EYFS provision now includes Pre-school (Nursery), Reception and Year 1 children working within a carefully planned mixed-age environment. Our pre-school children join the Skylark class, where they benefit from a nurturing, developmentally appropriate curriculum delivered through high-quality continuous provision and focused teaching. This structure enables our youngest learners to feel part of the wider school community from the very beginning, while still receiving provision tailored to their age and stage. Staffing is organised to ensure appropriate ratios, specialist early years expertise and consistent, high-quality support for all children.

This policy aims to ensure:

- That all children, including those in Pre-school, access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
- A close working partnership with parents and carers, including the use of Tapestry to share learning and celebrate progress.
- That every child is included and supported

Safeguarding in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Safeguarding is at the heart of our Early Years provision. At St Thomas à Becket CofE Primary School, we are fully committed to ensuring that all children in our Pre-school (Nursery), Reception and Year 1 mixed-age EYFS environment are safe, protected from harm and able to thrive. Our approach reflects the principles and statutory duties set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024) and is fully aligned with the EQUA Mead Learning Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (2025–26).

Safeguarding in the EYFS encompasses:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring children grow up in safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

These principles apply equally to all children in our EYFS, including those in our Pre-school provision.

Trust-wide Safeguarding Responsibilities

As part of the EQUA Mead Learning Trust, our safeguarding practice follows the procedures and expectations set out in the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This includes:

- Adherence to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Clear roles for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs
- Compliance with safer recruitment procedures
- A whole-school approach to safeguarding, including online safety, behaviour, attendance, SEND and health needs

The Trust policy states that “all our pupils are safe and protected from harm” and that safeguarding procedures must help pupils “feel safe and learn to stay safe” (EQUA Mead Safeguarding Policy, p.3). These expectations underpin our EYFS practice.

Safeguarding in the EYFS Environment

Our mixed-age EYFS model—where Pre-school, Reception and Year 1 children learn together—requires careful attention to safeguarding, supervision and risk management. We ensure:

1. Safe Staffing and Ratios

Staffing ratios meet or exceed EYFS statutory requirements. Additional staffing is deployed where needed to support Nursery children. All staff and regular volunteers undergo safer recruitment checks, including DBS clearance, in line with Trust policy (p.6).

2. Staff Training and Awareness

All EYFS staff:

- Receive safeguarding training in line with Trust expectations
- Are familiar with the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Are alert to signs of abuse, neglect and wider safeguarding risks (p.7)
- Know how to respond to disclosures using the Trust's procedures and Wiltshire SVPP flowcharts (p.8)
- Staff working directly with children have read KCSIE Part 1/Annex A, Annex B and Part 5.

3. Safe Physical Environment

Risk assessments are completed for all EYFS spaces, including the Skylark classroom and outdoor area.

The environment is organised to ensure visibility, safe movement and appropriate supervision for mixed-age play.

Site security and visitor procedures follow Trust expectations (p.6–7).

4. Online Safety

Children are taught how to stay safe online through developmentally appropriate activities. Staff follow the Trust's online safety procedures, including filtering, monitoring and safe use of mobile/smart technology (p.9).

5. Managing Concerns

Any safeguarding concern relating to a child in the EYFS is:

- Recorded on CPOMs
- Reported immediately to the DSL (Miss Chloe Stobbart) or DDSL (Mrs Elka Priddin or Mrs Natasha Erscott)
- Managed in line with Trust procedures for referrals, early help and multi-agency working
- Concerns about staff follow the Trust's procedures for allegations and low-level concerns (p.9–10).

Working in Partnership with Parents

We recognise that strong relationships with parents and carers are essential for safeguarding young children. We:

- Share information about children's learning and wellbeing through Tapestry
- Communicate promptly about any concerns
- Support families to understand safeguarding expectations, including online safety and attendance
- Encourage parents to speak openly with staff about any worries

Promoting a Culture of Safety and Wellbeing

Safeguarding is embedded across our EYFS curriculum and daily practice. Children are supported to:

- Build trusting relationships with adults
- Learn how to keep themselves safe
- Develop independence within safe boundaries
- Express their feelings and experiences

As the Trust policy states, "the voice of the child is central to our safeguarding practice" (p.8), and this principle guides all interactions in our EYFS setting.

Intimate Care

Our nursery follows the school's Intimate Care Policy to ensure that all intimate care—such as toileting, changing, washing and supporting children with their personal hygiene—is carried out safely, sensitively and in a manner that protects each child's dignity and emotional wellbeing. Staff involved in intimate care are appropriately trained, have undergone the required safeguarding checks, and work within clear health and safety, manual handling and safeguarding protocols to ensure both children and staff are protected. Intimate care is provided in an appropriate, private environment, with two adults present whenever possible, and with due regard for the child's comfort and privacy. Parents are asked to provide consent for routine intimate care, and where a child has more specific or ongoing needs, an individual intimate care plan is created collaboratively with parents, the child (where appropriate) and relevant professionals; these plans are reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect the child's current needs. Families are expected to supply any personal items such as spare clothing, nappies or underwear, and staff will ensure that soiled clothing is handled discreetly and returned securely. Staff maintain open communication with parents to ensure a consistent, sensitive approach, and any concerns about a child's welfare or physical presentation are reported immediately following the school's safeguarding procedures.

Curriculum, teaching and Learning

The St Thomas à Becket Early Years curriculum has been written in accordance with the latest version of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (September 2024). It is informed by the Development Matters curriculum guidance and the Chris Quigley Curriculum Essentials for Early Years. Our Nursery curriculum is fully aligned with this framework and has been planned as a progressive foundation for Reception. Nursery children also take part in short daily sessions of Essential Letters and Sounds Foundation Stage and White Rose Maths Foundation Stage to ensure early familiarity with core concepts and classroom routines, supporting a seamless transition into Reception.

The EYFS framework includes seven interconnected areas of learning and development:

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The first three areas—communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development—are recognised as the prime areas, forming the essential foundations for learning, relationships, and children's wider development.

At St Thomas à Becket, communication and language is given the highest priority across both Nursery and Reception. In line with Development Matters (2021), we understand that rich, back-and-forth interactions, conversational modelling and the intentional expansion of vocabulary underpin all seven areas of learning. Practitioners consistently comment on children's interests, extend their thinking with meaningful language, and provide a language-rich environment. This good practice continues into Key Stage One through the high-quality continuous provision in the Skylark classroom.

A further key priority is the teaching of reading. From the moment children join us in Nursery or Reception, they are immersed in a culture that values reading, storytelling and a love of books.

Phonics is taught systematically using the Essential Letters and Sounds synthetic phonics programme, enabling children to build strong early reading skills from the outset.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) underpins our approach throughout the EYFS. Relationships are central to everything we do, and we aim for every child to feel safe, valued, confident and ready to learn. We teach and model self-regulation, and we introduce rules and boundaries through our whole-school behaviour policy, helping children develop emotional literacy and independence.

Our EYFS curriculum is delivered through a balance of high-quality adult-led learning and carefully planned continuous provision. For both Nursery and Reception, our provision reflects the diverse needs of our children, the ambition of our curriculum and our commitment to challenge all learners. Research from educationalists such as Alistair Bryce-Clegg, Greg Bottrill, Anna Ephgrave and Elizabeth Jarman informs our practice, alongside our professional knowledge of our children. Although our environment reflects all our Learning Powers—perseverance, resilience, co-operation, challenge, imagination, reflection and hard work—independence acts as a central, golden thread. By fostering independence from Nursery onwards, children are well-prepared for later transitions, including into Key Stage Two.

Across every part of our provision, children have continuous access to high-quality indoor and outdoor learning opportunities, carefully designed to inspire curiosity, creativity and deep engagement. Children are encouraged to explore, create, problem-solve, investigate and express themselves freely. Every day, our pupils might become designers, artists, writers, scientists, musicians, mathematicians, storytellers, athletes, geographers or historians. Through thoughtful, play-based experiences, children consolidate their skills, broaden their understanding and develop into independent, resilient learners who show motivation, curiosity and a willingness to embrace challenge. Throughout the EYFS environment, you will find children deeply engaged in purposeful activities they have chosen themselves, reflecting the strength of our child-centred approach to early learning.

Effective learning:

We believe in the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning that are set out in Development Matters 2021. These are:

Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘having a go’.

Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achieving.

Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Our EYFS curriculum is ambitious and aims to teach all children the skills and knowledge in order for them to achieve the seventeen Early Learning Goals described in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. We teach through a range of teaching methods including child-initiated learning, whole class teaching, group teaching, investigations and problem solving together, and independently. As many activities as possible are play-based; however, there is also a need for direct teacher-led activities to ensure children gain essential knowledge and skills from their teacher. Activities are expertly modelled and children are given sufficient time, support and resources to repeat and practise them.

Assessment

At St Thomas à Becket, we use the EQUA Mead Learning Trust Strong Foundations tracking document to monitor children's progress from Nursery through to Year 1. Progress is reviewed three times a year, allowing staff to identify emerging strengths and areas requiring further support, and ensuring continuity and progression across the Early Years and into Key Stage One. During the first term in Reception, each child is assessed using a combination of the statutory government Baseline Assessment and teacher observations aligned with our curriculum milestones. These assessments help us identify patterns of attainment within the cohort so that teaching can be adapted for individual learners and specific groups. Throughout the year, practitioners continue to record each child's development and indicate whether they are on track or not on track to achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of the Reception year in July.

Children are assessed against each Early Learning Goal (ELG) and are judged at either Emerging or Expected—the previous Exceeding category no longer applies. Ongoing assessment takes place through a mixture of formal and informal observations as well as planned activities, ensuring teachers gain a holistic understanding of each child's progress.

We record each child's level of development across the year and, at the end of the final term in Reception, make a final judgement for every ELG. This information is submitted to the local authority and is shared with parents as part of each child's end-of-year report. These reports include detailed commentary on children's holistic development across all areas of learning, celebrating their strengths, outlining areas for continued growth, and summarising their overall progress as they prepare for the transition into Year 1.

Equal Opportunities

All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and scaffolding will be in place to support all children to access the curriculum accordingly. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and where needed with liaison with the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

Children are given equal access to and are encouraged to take part in all activities. Children are given opportunities to explore and enjoy stories, music and poetry from a wide range of cultures.

Health, Safety and Risk Management

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe, secure and well cared for throughout the school day. All members of staff working in the Skylark class—including those supporting Nursery children—hold a full paediatric first aid certificate, ensuring that children are always supervised by a trained practitioner in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2024) requirements. These are displayed in the school office.

We are committed to teaching children about boundaries, rules and limits, helping them understand why these are important. Through modelling, co-regulation and consistent language, we support children to develop self-regulation skills and manage their emotions appropriately. Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) is at the heart of all our practice, and children are given choices wherever appropriate to help them develop independence and decision-making as essential life skills.

We believe that children should be encouraged to take appropriate risks in their play and learning, while being taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. Our aim is always to protect both the

physical and psychological wellbeing of every child. We know that children learn best when they are healthy, safe, supported in their individual needs, and have strong, positive relationships with the adults around them and their peers.

To ensure children's safety, we maintain a robust system of risk management. This includes:

- A comprehensive written Early Years Risk Assessment, covering both indoor and outdoor learning environments
- Daily checklists completed by staff to ensure environments and resources remain safe and fit for purpose
- Dynamic risk assessments, made continuously by staff in response to children's play, changes in the environment, or emerging needs

These measures work together to ensure that risks are continually assessed, mitigated and reviewed.

Our safer eating procedures exceed statutory expectations. All snacks and lunches are supervised by a paediatric first aider, and eating takes place family style at the table to promote safety, social interaction, independence and healthy eating habits. Staff remain vigilant at all times to minimise choking risks, model good table manners and ensure that all dietary requirements are followed precisely. Systems are in place to ensure children with allergies or specific dietary needs receive the correct meal, and we work closely with our catering providers to maintain accurate, up-to-date information.

We participate in the free fruit and milk scheme for under-fives, and provide a universal infant free school meal for children in Reception. Fresh drinking water is always available, and children are encouraged to help themselves using their own cups, promoting independence and healthy habits from an early age.

These safety and welfare arrangements sit within our wider suite of safeguarding policies, all of which are written in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and reviewed regularly to ensure best practice.

Parental Involvement

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first educators, and we place high value on building strong, respectful and collaborative relationships with families from the very beginning of their journey with us. Because our class is a mixed Nursery, Reception and Year 1 setting, we ensure that transition arrangements are personalised and age-appropriate for each stage of entry. We work in close partnership with parents and carers through:

Induction and Transition for Nursery Starters

✓ Pre-start contact through welcome packs, induction information and opportunities to visit the Nursery environment.

✓ Nursery induction sessions for parents and children to meet key staff, explore the setting and begin forming positive relationships.

✓ A gentle but flexible transition period, where Nursery children can attend a week of morning sessions—including lunchtime—to help them settle confidently before moving to their longer sessions.

✓ Ongoing communication through Tapestry, informal conversations and newsletters so parents remain connected and informed as their child begins their Nursery journey.

Induction and Transition for Reception Starters

✓ Contact with families before starting school, including welcome packs, induction meetings and classroom visits.

✓ A dedicated Reception induction session for parents and children to meet staff, learn about the curriculum and ask questions.

✓ A carefully structured but flexible September transition, where children attend a week of mornings plus lunch to become familiar with staff, routines and expectations before moving into full days.

✓ Visits into the classroom where Reception children can explore the continuous provision alongside Nursery and Year 1 peers, helping them feel part of the class community from the start.

Universal Parent Partnerships Across the Mixed-Age Class

✓ Hosting phonics and early reading workshops so parents can see how their child will begin to learn early literacy skills and how to support learning at home.

✓ An open-door policy, allowing parents to speak with EYFS staff about queries, concerns or celebrations. Equally, staff will proactively contact parents if they have concerns about a child's progress or wellbeing.

✓ Regular written communication through class and whole-school newsletters.

✓ Sharing photos, updates and 'wow moments' on Tapestry, enabling parents to celebrate their child's achievements, interactions and special moments across Nursery, Reception and Year 1.

✓ Twice-yearly parent-teacher consultations to discuss progress, wellbeing, next steps and how school and home can work together.

✓ An end-of-year report summarising each child's attainment, progress and attitude to learning. For Reception children this includes a summary of ELG outcomes; Nursery children receive a developmentally appropriate progress summary.

✓ Parents are invited to a variety of school events, such as collective worship, celebrations, sports day and seasonal performances, helping them feel part of the wider school community.

✓ Opportunities for parents to volunteer in school—such as hearing readers or supporting activities—subject to the appropriate safeguarding checks.