

PENNTHORPE EYFS TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY 2025 – 2026

THIS POLICY INCLUDES EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Policy Author:	Head – Chris Murray
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Governor sign – off		
Governor: Emily Harrison	Date:	

1. Our Early Years Department:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory guidance for all children from birth to age five. As we have our entire EYFS department on one site, this enables a seamless transition from one year group to the next and allows continuity of learning and teaching.

2. Seven key features of effective practice:

There are seven key features that underpin our practice in the Early Years at Pennthorpe:

- We want the best for every child, and all children deserve to have an equal chance of success.
- High quality care underpins every interaction and learning experience, which is always at the centre of every practitioner’s thinking.
- Curriculum planning is ambitious, where early learning is based around the development of language, and depth is considered more important than superficial coverage.
- Effective pedagogy is applied as a mix of approaches, including play, modelling by adults, observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching in an enabling environment.
- Effective use of assessment, drawing on an understanding of child development, and focusing on what a child can do and what they know.
- Encourage the development of self-regulation, and executive function.
- Form a strong, and respectful relationship with parents, including listening regularly to parents and offering clear information about their child’s progress.

3. How we help children learn:

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our Early Years department helps children to continue to learn by providing interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Learning and Development:

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good

parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up'. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

We aim to provide young children a personalised, and inspiring start, based on the following four principles:

- Every child is unique, and is constantly learning through all their experiences and interactions. We want children to be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children should learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop through enabling environments. They learn from support from adults, who teach them according to their individual needs and interests, and who help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong relationship between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children learn and develop at different rates, and we believe every child, including children with special educational needs and disabilities should benefit from effective teaching and learning.

The characteristics of effective learning:

- We aim to ensure that these characteristics of effective learning and teaching; playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically are embedded into our practice.
- We encourage every child to enjoy their achievements and develop their own ideas.
- We seek to encourage children's natural curiosity by providing plenty of opportunities to investigate and explore inside and outside.
- We encourage our children to 'have a go' at every activity and to persevere to a satisfying conclusion.

Learning through play:

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children learn to think. We provide the opportunities for planned purposeful play through a mix of adult led and child initiated activity in the seven areas of learning which make up the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Adult led activity becomes more predominant as the children move into Reception. The staff plan and provide a range of play and playful activities which help children make progress in each of the areas of learning and development.

4. The curriculum:

For each area of learning the practice guidance sets out the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected the children will know and be able to do by the end of the Reception year and we work towards, and in the case of our able children, beyond the Early Learning Goals. We use the Statutory Framework for the EYFS and the 'Development Matters' guidance to plan the learning for our children. Cross-curricular links are made where possible to ensure learning is contextual and relevant. Extended provision through flexi day care, is available for some EYFS pupils.

Specialist provision is provided in:

PE and Games	Honeypot, Beehive and Reception
French	Reception
Art	Reception
Forest School	Honeypot, Beehive and Reception
Music	Honeypot, Beehive and Reception
Swimming	Reception

5. Assessment:

Formative assessment is embedded into our curriculum. We assess how the children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use the information we gain from observations, photographs and samples of their work. Parents are encouraged to contribute by sharing information about their children. Observations of what each child can do are used to identify where they are on their own development pathway. Staff record their observations and photographs and make assessments in a 'learning journal' called Arc Pathway. This helps us to plan for ways in which to strengthen and deepen the child's current learning and development, report to parents and assess next steps.

At each of the parent consultations, parents are provided with information on how their child is progressing and with a formal written report through the year in addition to face to face meetings. At the end of each year a report details their child's progress and next steps to progress their learning further.

We ensure all children receive 2-year-old developmental checks and this is shared with parents, who are encouraged to share this with other relevant professional. We complete a short written summary of the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. If significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, we develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving parents and/or carers and any other professional.

At the end of the EYFS (in Reception) the children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals, and this is the EYFS Profile. Teacher's decide whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels, and are emerging. The Early Learning Goals are not used as a curriculum and do not limit the wide and rich experiences we offer, crucial to child development. The Early Learning Goals support teachers to make a holistic, best fit judgement about a child's development, and their readiness for Year 1. Teacher's form their judgement about whether an individual child is at the expected level of development by drawing on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. The Profile is shared with the parents in written format, and discussed with the class teacher in the end of term Parents Meeting. The Profile is also shared with Year 1 Class Teachers, along with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relating to the three key characteristics of effective learning. The Profile results are also reported to the local authority, upon request.

Areas in which the child's learning needs to be challenged and extended are identified and planned for using the appropriate higher age band in the 'Development Matters' guidance. In the case of an able Reception child, aspects of the Year 1 curriculum are introduced. Areas in which the child needs support and consolidation are pinpointed. These are discussed with the child's parents and/or carers and an agreement of how to support the child will be achieved. Appropriate support, which may include assisting a family to access relevant services from other agencies will be given, and an IEP is actioned in consultation with the Head of Learning Support if necessary. Similarly, if a child is judged to be gifted and talented they are highlighted on the gifted and talented register and extension is provided for them on an individual basis.

6. Prime and Specific Areas of Development:

We focus initially on the three Prime areas of learning which are especially important to develop children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building the capacity to learn, to form relationships and to thrive.

These are the prime areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The children are given lots of opportunities to communicate and express themselves, to participate in physical activity and to develop coordination and control. We encourage children to show a developing respect for others, to treat everyone with kindness and to develop appropriate behaviour.

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. This is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary. The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Our Educational Programmes involve activities and experiences for children, as set out under each of the areas of learning.

Personal Social and Emotional Development:

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world.

- Strong, warm, and supportive relationships with adults will enable children learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.
- Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary.

- Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently.
- Through supported interactions with other children, they will learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably.

Self-Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly;
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate;
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge;
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly;
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

Building Relationships

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers;
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial.

- By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.
- Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive.
- Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Early Learning Goal

Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

Speaking

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

Physical Development:

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy, and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults.

- By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility.
- Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being.
- Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy.
- Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.
- Taking advantage of our facilities and specialist staff to play sports, use the MUGA, take part in Forest School and in Reception, go swimming.

Early Learning Goal

Gross Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;

- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing;

- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading.

- Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together.
- Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words.
- Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing). Having varied opportunities for children to mark make and write across the setting is vital, this includes paper, blackboards and writing on the floor with chalk.

Early Learning Goal

Comprehension

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

Word Reading

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Writing

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

E. Mathematics:

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically.

- Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers.
- By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built.
- In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures.
- It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Early Learning Goal

Number

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number;
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5;
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

Numerical Patterns

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system;
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity;
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

F. Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community.

- The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters.
- In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.
- As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Early Learning Goal

Past and Present

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

People, Culture, and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps;
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

The Natural World

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity.

- It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials.
- The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts.
- The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Early Learning Goal

a. Creating with Materials

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function;
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used;
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

b. Being Imaginative and Expressive

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher;
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs;
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

prescribed by a child's GP or other medical professional (see exclusion).