



EARLY YEARS POLICY

COLLEGE TOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Approved Date	Sept 2026
Approved At FGB	Sept 2026
Date of Next Review	Sept 2027
Statutory	YES
Adopted from Bracknell Forest	NO

Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which came into effect in September 2021, including the updates effective from September 2026.

“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”, Department for Education, 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school the children can join us in Nursery after their third birthday, or during a phased introduction at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. We develop our environment around the four principles of early years education (appendix 1) as set out in the EYFS Framework.

As stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (3.37), we ensure there is at least one member of staff with a full pediatric first aid certificate available both on site and when on trips. The children are monitored and supervised at meal/snack times by staff who are also pediatric first aid trained.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework identifies regular staff supervision as a statutory requirement (3.34 & 3.35). Supervision supports improved practice through coaching and training as well as supporting the interests of the children and staff. We provide supervision and training for our staff every 4-6 weeks and additional sessions as needed on an individual basis. We also use the National College and tailor training to meet the needs of the staff and the cohort.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework has been updated to include guidance on children’s screen use (3.94). At College Town Primary School, we recognise that children may already have access to screens at home, and therefore, we limit screen use wherever possible during the school day. Where screens are used, content is carefully pre-selected to ensure that it is age-appropriate, slow-paced and repetitive

Intent

At College Town Primary School we deliver a curriculum that is embedded in curiosity and rich in wonder. We understand the importance and integral role of 'play' in learning and this is at the heart of our Early Years curriculum with periods of uninterrupted child-led learning indoors and out. Our environment promotes challenge, exploration and builds a love of learning through positive interactions and a mix of open-ended play and adult directed learning. Nurturing relationships between staff and children, consistent routines and strong relationships with parents are key to supporting every child to succeed in their learning.

At College Town, we know that children learn best when their learning is supported by high quality interactions and opportunities where they can practice and develop their new skills and understanding. It is our intent that all children who pass through College Town Primary School Early Years develop emotionally, physically and cognitively in an environment that values all cultures, communities and people. Our aim is for our children to leave their Early Years as confident and independent learners, believing in themselves and their abilities. This is reflected in our SEN and inclusion policy, enabling all children to access learning whatever their ability and in such instances where children are unable to meet personal needs, staff are aware of the procedures as outlined in our Intimate Care Policy.

We recognise the crucial role of a good Early Years education and believe that our curriculum builds a powerful foundation upon which the rest of a child's learning will be successfully built.

Implementation

At College Town Primary School, we prioritise creating a 'language rich' environment through songs, nursery rhymes, stories and providing time for quality interactions between adults and children and between peers. Staff are trained to ensure that interactions are positive and progressive, allowing children to flourish and gather words at pace in order to become confident communicators.

The curriculum is taught through topics which are enriched with classroom enhancements, trips and visitors. Topics are supported by quality key texts through our high quality book collection adding to a language rich environment. All planning is flexible and responsive to children's needs and can be changed and adapted and takes into consideration the Characteristics of Effective Learning (see appendix 2).

Children are supported to become early readers, developing a love and passion for books through the systematic teaching of phonics using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds scheme. In addition, we prioritise Story Time to foster a love of reading, enjoyment of books and the development of comprehension skills. We also have a Book of the Week, where we explore high-quality, language-rich texts and further develop children's vocabulary, comprehension and understanding.

We focus on the development of handwriting through the explicit teaching of letter formation. Mathematical thinking is developed through direct teaching, practical tasks and daily number songs and rhymes. We aim for our children to become confident mathematicians who are able to apply their knowledge and understanding to everyday situations.

Children are able to take part in Forest School sessions each week. Our Forest School provides children the opportunity to take risks, make choices, find new ways of learning and problem solve as

well as develop their physical strength and dexterity. It supports well-being and self-regulation whilst continuing their sense of wonder and curiosity in the world around them.

We understand the importance of parental engagement and believe that our parents have a crucial role to play in their child's education from Early Years and beyond. We work hard to create strong partnerships between the home and school. Parents receive curriculum news each half term to inform them of what their child is learning and how they can support at home and KIRFS for maths learning.

Parents enjoy using Tapestry to engage in their child's learning at school through shared observations and can share experiences and learning from home by sending back observations to the class teacher.

Assessment

From September 2021 all children who enter into school for their Reception year must complete the Reception Baseline Assessment. This must be completed within the first 6 weeks and prior to any formal teaching and learning. Teachers work with each child on a 1:1 basis to complete tasks in both literacy and maths. These tasks must be completed on a laptop/tablet but are designed to be interactive and non-threatening.

At College Town Primary, regular assessment takes place each term in all key areas. These assessments inform teachers about next steps, gaps in common knowledge and relevant interventions to be planned. Observations happen weekly for each child and will be shared with parents via our online platform Tapestry.

At the end of their year in Reception, an Early Years Foundation Stage Profile will be completed for each child. The profile will provide teachers and parents with a well-rounded picture of a child's understanding, abilities, attainment and readiness for year 1. Each child must be assessed against the Early Learning Goals (appendix 3) and practitioners must assess if a child is at the 'Expected' level of attainment or not, known as 'Emerging'. Year 1 teachers and parents must be given a copy of the profile for each child.

For children with SEND, reasonable adjustments can be made to assessments.

Transition

At College Town Primary School, we understand how difficult it can be to change settings for young children and our transitions are carefully planned to ensure continuity of structure and a sense of belonging for new children.

We work effectively with all feeder nurseries by taking the time to visit the settings and children and meet with key workers to begin professional dialogue to ensure a smooth start to Reception.

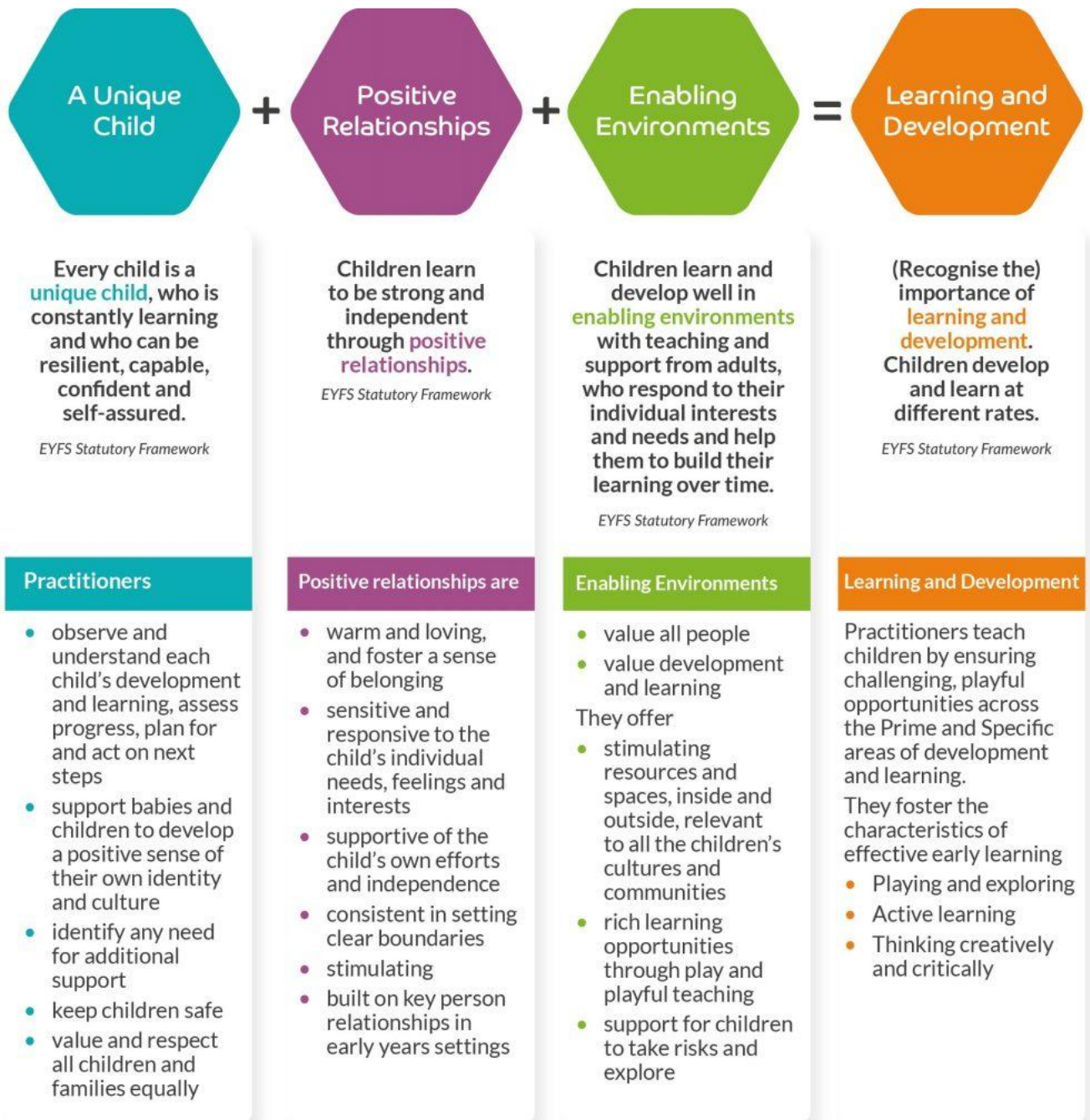
All children starting Reception have two stay and play sessions to become familiar with their new environment and staff. Parents and carers can ask questions and share information about their child with staff during these sessions too. We offer home visits to children who will be joining the school from feeder nurseries. The school has a staggered start with two half days offering the children the chance to experience both a morning with lunch and an afternoon before starting full time on day 3. Children are given a booklet to complete over the summer holidays that they can bring in and share with their new teachers, sparking initial conversations and relationship building.

We recognise that the move to Year 1 has the potential to be another stressful time for both children and parents as they leave the Early Years and embark on the National Curriculum. In the Summer term, all Reception children visit and spend the afternoon with their new teachers in their new classrooms. The new teachers are also invited down to Reception to spend a 'Story Time' with the children. In some cases classes may be mixed to re-balance the year group. In this instance, we will ensure children spend time in their new classes whilst still in Reception to begin forging new friendships and a sense of security and safety.

For children attending our Nursery, we offer home visits to each child starting alongside staggered starts. We also invite parents to join us for story time in the Teepee prior to their child starting Nursery.

Appendix 1

EYFS Principles



Appendix 2

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Engagement

Playing and Exploring

Finding out and exploring

- Showing curiosity about objects, events and people
- Using senses to explore the world around them
- Engaging in open-ended activity
- Showing particular interests

Playing with what they know

- Pretending objects are things from their experience
- Representing their experiences in play
- Taking on a role in their play
- Acting out experiences with other people

Being willing to 'have a go'

- Initiating activities
- Seeking challenge
- Showing a 'can do' attitude
- Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning by trial and error

Motivation

Active Learning

Being involved and concentrating

- Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time
- Showing high levels of energy, fascination
- Not easily distracted
- Paying attention to details

Keeping on trying

- Persisting with activity when challenges occur
- Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off
- Bouncing back after difficulties

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

- Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals
- Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result
- Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise

Thinking

Creative and Critical Thinking

Having their own ideas

- Thinking of ideas
- Finding ways to solve problems
- Finding new ways to do things

Making links

- Making links and noticing patterns in their experience
- Making predictions
- Testing their ideas
- Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect

Choosing ways to do things

- Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal
- Checking how well their activities are going
- Changing strategy as needed
- Reviewing how well the approach worked

Appendix 3

Early Learning Goals

Communication and Language; Listening, Attention and Understanding

- 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.

Communication and Language; Speaking

- 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.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Self-Regulation

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behavior 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.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Building Relationships

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

Physical Development; Gross Motor Skills

- 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.

Physical Development; Fine Motor Skills

- 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, paintbrushes and cutlery.
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

Literacy; Comprehension

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by re-telling 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.

Literacy; Word Reading

- 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.

Literacy; Writing

- 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.

Mathematics; Number

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

Mathematics; Numerical Patterns

- 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.

Understanding the World; Past and Present

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their role 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.

Understanding the World; People, Culture and Communities

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experience 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 (where appropriate) maps.

Understanding the World; The Natural World

- 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 seasons and changing states of matter.

Expressive Arts and Design; Creating with Materials

- 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.

Expressive Arts and Design; Being Imaginative and Expressive

- 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, pomes and stories with others, and (when appropriate) try to move in time with music.