



OLTON
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Working Together; Achieving More

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Teaching and Learning Policy

Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review: October 2026

Reviewed by: Mr L. Chamberlain

Chair of Governors: Mrs Ellen Dunlevy-Wilkes



EYFS Teaching and Learning Policy

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday.

The EYFS is statutory as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025) for group and school-based providers, along with the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2025 handbook.

Intent: At Olton Primary School we offer a curriculum rich in wonder and memorable experiences. We work hard to provide a stimulating environment that provides exciting opportunities, promotes challenge, exploration, adventure, and a real love of learning. It is our intent that all children develop physically, verbally, cognitively, and emotionally in an environment which values all cultures, communities, and people. We aim for our children to be confident and independent, to believe in themselves and interact positively with others.

We understand that play is an integral part of learning, and this is at the heart of our Early Years curriculum. We believe that the correct mix of adult directed, and uninterrupted child-initiated play ensures the best outcomes for pupils. Warm and positive relationships between staff and children, consistent routines and strong relationships with parents are key. We recognise the crucial role that Early Years education has to play in providing firm foundations upon which the rest of a child's education is successfully based.

We are committed to developing children's cultural capital by broadening their knowledge, experiences, and vocabulary to prepare them for future success.

We provide a broad and balanced Early Years curriculum: -

- Based on first-hand experiences and purposeful interactions
 - Through carefully planned adult or child-initiated activities
 - Whilst having a regard for the skills and attitudes the Key Stage One curriculum will demand
 - We ensure that our curriculum is ambitious, one which means that all children can succeed.
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- We aim to make the child's first experience of school happy, positive, and fun.
 - We aim to foster a love of learning and develop enquiring minds
 - We aim to instil the Characteristics of Effective Learning such as independence, resilience, and confidence
 - We aim to promote emotional well-being and emotionally literate children. This is achieved by focusing on the four principles of the EYFS which is complemented by our whole school behaviour policy. Our behaviour policy focuses on a growth mindset approach to learning and Zones of Regulation.
 - We aim to build positive relationships and work in partnership with families (recognising that parents are their child's first and foremost educator), carers and professionals to support every child to develop and learn.

Implement:

At Olton Primary School we prioritise creating a 'language rich' environment through the use of songs, nursery rhymes, stories and providing time for quality interactions between adults and between children. Trained staff ensure that interactions are positive and progressive, allowing children to flourish and gather words at pace in order to become confident communicators. Children are encouraged to become early readers through enjoyment of books and the systematic teaching of phonics. The children learn nursery rhymes and develop their mathematical thinking through direct teaching and exploration. We want our children to become confident 'Masters of Maths' who can apply what they have learnt to real life experiences.

Staff receive regular professional development in early years pedagogy, phonics, and language acquisition to ensure high-quality interactions and curriculum delivery.

We have designed our school environment to enable our children to strengthen their core muscles through physical play, children spend time outdoors in their natural environment in all weathers. They develop through wonderful, exploratory, sensory experiences in our mud kitchen, sandpit, water area and also taking part in Forest School sessions. Our learning environment is adaptable in order to reflect children's interests and progression. The children are supported to learn to work together, manage their feelings and ask questions through skilled adult facilitated play. The curriculum is taught through topics and themes which are enriched with classroom enhancements, trips, and visitors. Topics are supported by quality key texts. These are chosen carefully to encourage children's speech, language, and communication development. All planning, however, is flexible and responsive to children's needs so plans can be changed and adapted dependent on children's interests.

We understand the importance of parental engagement and believe that our parents have a crucial role to play in their children's education. We work hard to create strong partnerships between home and school. Parents receive regular updates on Class Dojo to inform them of what their child is learning and to explain how they can support this at home. Parents enjoy using EvidenceMe to engage in their child's learning and share experiences from home.

As part of the learning and teaching process, children are assessed in relation to their progress towards the Early Learning Goals. These judgements are made on the basis of accumulative observations and in-depth knowledge of the children acquired through ongoing assessment. These ongoing assessments are used to inform planning and next steps in teaching and learning for all children throughout the year.

Principles into Practice:

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

Foundation Stage Curriculum:

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the prime areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy

- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication, and physical development.

The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for school life. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children progress through Reception at Olton Primary and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Teaching and Learning Style:

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning throughout our school. These features equally apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS. Within the EYFS, the development of a holistic learner is recognised based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to humanitarian values such as compassion.

Teaching in the EYFS:

- Has a carefully planned curriculum which aims for all children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS.
- We ensure that our curriculum is ambitious, and the content taught offers learning beyond the Early Learning Goals, ensuring the children's readiness for the Key Stage 1 curriculum.
- Involves creating adult and child-initiated opportunities that will encourage children to explore, create, investigate, rehearse, practise, repeat and discover.
- Involves developing Characteristics of Effective Learning.
- Uses a multi-sensory, fun play-based approach.
- Shows awareness of the different ways and rates by which children develop and learn; that there are many factors affecting achievement including ability, emotional state, age, and maturity, and how this informs teaching strategies.
- Has a high expectation of children's behaviour and attainment.
- Recognises the importance of emotional well-being.
- Is outside as much as possible ensuring children take ownership of their learning both inside the classroom but also in the outdoor environment.

Learning in the EYFS:

- Through a comprehensive induction programme from home to Nursery and/or from a child's F1 setting to F2 we ensure prior learning and development is valued and the transition into School is supported.
- We encourage cross-curricular links to ensure a seamless transition into Key Stage One by building on previous experiences and planning those for the future.
- Utilises all adults within the learning environment to accelerate learning opportunities through the role of play partner.

In the EYFS children are learning when they: -

- Collaborate and learn from one another through shared experiences. Interactions enable children to learn about the world through their experiences with others. This provides deep and meaningful experiences which shape their future learning.
- Are supported to set their own challenges in their physical environment and in their learning.
- Access resources independently.
- Use their senses to explore and investigate.
- Develop persistence and positive attitudes to learning as detailed in the Characteristics of Effective Learning.
- Are given the opportunities to be curious, motivated and inspired learners. An importance given to a sustained shared thinking approach; the play partner guides the narrative of the interactions, whilst encouraging children to reflect on their own views

Play in the EYFS:

We highly value play and the learning it brings in itself. Anyone who has observed play for any length of time will recognise that, for young children, play is a tool for learning.

Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules thereby developing emotional resilience and self-regulation.

Children have the opportunity to think creatively, and problem solve alongside others. They express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations as well as re-enact positive experiences building self-awareness and self-esteem.

Continuous Provision

"To continue the provision for learning in the absence of an adult". Alistair Bryce-Clegg 2013

Indoors and outdoors resources are organised to develop children's skills in personal interaction and exploration and are linked to current assessment data. Resources are carefully selected to meet the development needs of the children in order to enhance potential for new learning and consolidate prior learning. Resources are dressed/displayed to reflect children's interests – enabling discovery, investigation and exploration. Continuous provision transcends all areas of learning and provides children with the opportunity to demonstrate the three characteristics of effective learning. Children are given the freedom to make independent choices and are encouraged to be active learners and take control of their own learning.

The Role of the Adult in the Early Years

Adults in the EYFS are responsible for creating a nurturing and supportive learning environment, observing and assessing children's development, promoting positive interactions, and collaborating with families to ensure the well-rounded development of each child.

In each EYFS classroom an adult is planned to support the children as the role of 'Play Partner.' A Play Partner in early childhood education is a dedicated and responsive adult who actively engages with children during play activities, fostering a dynamic and enriching learning environment. This individual plays a vital role in observing, supporting, and extending children's play experiences, promoting holistic development by addressing social, emotional, cognitive, and physical aspects of their growth. Through thoughtful interactions, a play partner encourages curiosity, creativity, and collaboration, tailoring their involvement to the unique needs and interests of each child. The play partner is a facilitator of learning, contributing to the establishment of positive relationships, the development of essential life skills, and the creation of a safe and inclusive space where children can thrive.

The below principles guide the frequency of adult involvement during play:

- Regular Interaction – regular and consistent interaction with play partners is important. Daily opportunities for adult
- engagement during play can provide ongoing support for children's learning and development.
- Balanced Approach – While it's essential to have regular adult interaction, it's equally important to balance it with periods of independent play. Children benefit from opportunities to explore and experiment on their own, fostering independence and self-regulation.
- Response to Individual Needs – The frequency of adult engagement should be responsive to individual children's needs. Some children may require more support and encouragement, while others thrive with greater independence. Observation and assessment can help tailor the level of adult involvement.
- Varied Activities – Some activities may naturally lend themselves to more adult involvement, while others may be designed to promote independent exploration.
- Small Group and One-to-One Interaction - In addition to whole-group activities, having small group or one-on-one interactions with a play partner can be beneficial. This allows for more individualised support and attention, addressing specific learning goals.
- Responsive to children's Initiatives - Play partners should be responsive to children's initiatives and interests. If a child shows a particular interest in a specific activity or topic, the play partner may choose to engage more frequently to support and extend that interest.
- Flexible Approach - Flexibility is key. The frequency of adult engagement can vary from day to day based on the evolving needs of the children, the curriculum, and any special events or activities.

The goal is to create a supportive and responsive learning environment where adult engagement during play is thoughtfully integrated into the daily routine, taking into account the unique needs and interests of each child.

Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL)

We understand and recognise the importance of the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL) from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years 2025.

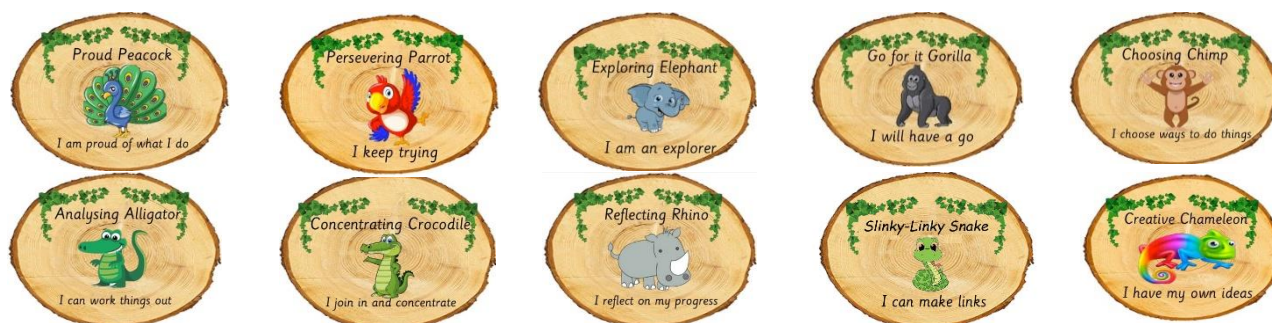
- Playing and Exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active Learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

- Creating and Thinking Critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

The focus of the CoEL is on **how children learn** rather than what they learn i.e. process over outcome. Underpinning the CoEL is the understanding that during their earliest years, children form attitudes about learning that will last a lifetime. Children who receive the right sort of support and encouragement during these years will be creative and adventurous learners throughout their lives. Children who do not receive this sort of support and interaction are likely to have a much different attitude about learning later on in life. Hence, why the supportive practitioner, and the environment they provide, need to nurture these for these CoEL behaviours to occur.

We have 10 animals that bring the CoEL alive across the EYFS; children receive stickers and certificates are also sent home when staff observe children displaying these learning behaviours in class.

- Go for it Gorilla** – For having a go and trying something new
- Slinky Linky Snake** – For making links in your learning
- Creative Chameleon** – For having your own ideas
- Choosing Chimp** – For choosing different ways to do things
- Concentrating Crocodile** – For joining in and concentrating
- Persevering Parrot** – For not giving up when things are tricky
- Proud Peacock** – For being proud of what you do
- Exploring Elephant** – For being an amazing explorer
- Analysing Alligator** – For working things out
- Reflecting Rhino** – For reflecting on your progress



Inclusion in the EYFS:

In consultation and working collaboratively with parents/guardians, the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) will lead on provision for children who may experience barriers to their learning, which may relate to sensory or physical impairment, learning difficulties or emotional or social development in line with the [Special Educational Needs \(SEN\) Code of Practice \(2015\)](#) and the school's SEN/Inclusion Policy.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children by: -

- Setting realistic and challenging expectations. We aim for all children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. We achieve this by planning for different learning styles, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities or medical needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds as well as children with diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued.
- Using resources, which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping which all children have equal access to.
- Monitoring children's progress and providing support where necessary, within the resources available to the school. This may include a phased transition programme dependant on a child's specific SEN needs.
- Providing specific targets detailed in Individual Education Plans (IEP) / One Page Profiles (OPP) and following external therapy or support programmes of work such as Speech and Language.
- Working collaboratively with families or carers, the SENCo and other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Parent Support Advisor.
- Ensuring a balance across classes, within each cohort, of gender, ability, children with additional learning or medical needs and summer born children.
- Acknowledging the wishes of parents and carers of twins and multiple birth siblings regarding class allocation in EYFS. Following discussions with parents and carers the school's usual practice is for twins and multiple birth siblings to be allocated to separate classes in Reception.

Safeguarding and Welfare:

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Olton Primary School. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure the children's safety. In EYFS we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe.

We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children.
- Promote good health, including the importance of oral health.
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately.
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the environment is safe, and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose.
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class iPads are used to photograph children (for EvidenceMe observations and assessment purposes) and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs.

Olton Primary School has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role. There are several Paediatric First aid trained members of staff in the EYFS with the appropriate qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Olton Primary School. Backing up this policy is a dedicated safeguarding team which includes three Designated Safeguarding Leads, one of whom is the Deputy Head, whose office is found in the Infant building. Staff have access to the 'My Concern' safeguarding system to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.

Our safeguarding practice is underpinned by the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2025).

The EYFS Curriculum:

The EYFS is statutory and is important in its own right as a basis for developing essential skills such as listening, speaking, persistence and collaborating with each other. The three prime areas cover the knowledge and skills which are the foundations for future progress, and which are applied and reinforced by the specific areas. All areas of learning are equally important and are interlinked.

The Non-Statutory curriculum document Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals guide our long-term planning together with the termly topics. In F1 activities are planned around the children's current needs, schemas, and interests to ensure all areas of the EYFS curriculum are embraced.

Weekly Planning focuses on day-to-day organisation of activities. It considers that children's learning is not necessarily sequential and that they may need time to consolidate, repeat and extend their learning in their own way. All planning is evaluated on an on-going basis and adapted in response to the children's needs and interests.

We offer the children in Nursery and Reception a 'hands-on' play based curriculum, both indoors and outdoors, throughout the day. Planning can be intentional, responsive, or anticipatory. It is flexible and can change in response to children's ideas and interests. Planning may also be linked to events in the community or around the world.

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults."

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025)

In addition to the activities planned by the adults, the children are offered plenty of opportunities to direct their own learning and staff are highly skilled in observing the children and recognising opportunities to support and extend children's ideas through the role of the 'Play Partner.'

Assessment in the EYFS:

During the children's first half term in the F1 and F2 classes, the teacher assesses each child's development and learning attainment against the criteria set out in Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals; Termly checkpoint assessments are used to assess a child's developmental stage. It is also a time for the teacher to discover the unique personality and interests of each child, which is vital in developing those positive relationships early on.

All children starting Reception will take part in the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The RBA is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. The RBA assesses a child in early Mathematics, Literacy and Communication and Language. The purpose of the RBA is to form the starting point for cohort-level school progress measures. Data from the RBA is compared to Key Stage 2 outcomes 7 years later to form the overall progress measure for a school.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure future planning reflects individual or group needs. Once a term, summative assessments are entered on to our school assessment tool, Otrack. Formative assessment in the Foundation Stage is continuous and takes the form of observations, examples of child-initiated work and samples of dated work from books and photographs and quality interaction highly skilled members of staff. The teachers and teaching assistants will share WOW moment observation records and share these on our electronic observation system 'EvidenceMe'. Parents are also encouraged to share experiences from home to add to their child's overall profile. These records are passed onto Year One teachers to further support a smooth transition.

We have regular termly parents' meetings take place to ensure parents/carers are informed of their child's progress. In F2, in addition to parents' meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms, parents receive an annual report that offers detailed comments on their child's progress in each area of learning and their Characteristics of Effective Learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs. The children are also given opportunity to comment on areas they would like to improve.

Reflection in the EYFS:

We use audits and surveys to reflect on our practice. This enables us to keep improving our practise and keep asking questions.

We use an Early Years setting evaluation sheet to record notes around the 3 I's; Intent, Implementation and Impact during periods of reflection, which has been developed using the [Education Inspection Framework \(updated 2025\)](#). This enables us to evaluate our aims, the quality of our education, the behaviour and attitudes of children, personal development of children and our own leadership and management.

Working with Parents/ carers:

We recognise the importance of working alongside parents and other significant adults during a child's education. We do this through: -

- Giving the children the opportunity to spend a morning or afternoon session with their teacher before starting school. We use this opportunity to invite parents into the classroom to take part in a meet and greet.
- Providing formal meetings for parents during the school year to discuss children's progress.
- Welcoming parents to discuss any concerns with the teacher and/or teaching assistants.
- Working to build good relationships with families to promote a regular two-way flow of information. This is achieved through our open-door policy and direct messaging to the class teacher via Class Dojo.
- Inviting parents to several 'Stunning Starter' or 'Fabulous Finale' workshops throughout the year, so that parents can gain an insight to their child's learning experiences.
- Curriculum evenings and workshop invitations throughout the year.
- Providing parents with the 'parent share' option on EvidenceMe (our electronic observation platform) so that they can share experiences from home.
- Sending out surveys to parents to obtain parental voice and information to inform practice.

Transition:

Transitions are carefully planned for, and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Children attend a number of introductory sessions to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Our Reception staff also speak directly with local nurseries and preschools, to familiarise themselves with the children.

For our Nursery transition, Parents/carers are encouraged to take up the offer of a meet and greet. The parents are able to meet directly with their child's class teacher. This is a valuable time to talk 1:1 with them and answer any concerns/queries they may have and also meet with the child, further supporting this transition and familiarity.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teacher meets with the Year 1 teacher to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend a transition session towards the end of the school year in the Year 1 classroom with their new class teacher to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher which provides them with another opportunity for 'Year 1 readiness.'

The Environment and Resources in the EYFS:

A rich and varied 'enabling' environment is actively planned for and continuously developed with varied multi-cultural and inclusive resources to encourage exploratory play-based learning and challenge. The learning environment encompasses both indoor and outdoor provision, which are of equal importance. Children are encouraged to experience all areas of the learning environment in all weathers. We encourage children to plan their own selection of activities balanced with adult initiated activities.

Impact:

Our curriculum and its delivery ensure that children, from their own individual starting points, make good progress. During their time with us, children make rapid progress towards the national expectation for a good level of development at the end of the year.

In recent years, the percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) has been above the national average.

Pupils also make good progress toward their age-related expectations both academically and socially, developing a sense of themselves before transitioning into Year One.

Children develop their characteristics of learning and are able to apply their knowledge to a range of situations making links and explaining their ideas and understanding. Children are confident to take risks and discuss their successes and things to develop with peers and adults drawing on their experiences to improve or adjust what they are doing. We believe our high standards are due to our carefully planned environment, enriched play-based curriculum, quality first teaching and the rigour of assessment.

- Children develop the characteristics of effective learning which helps them through the rest of school.
- Children develop the skills to become emotionally literate and have strategies available to ensure they are able to self-regulate and therefore ready to learn.
- Children develop the ability to manage risks.
- Children enjoy being independent in managing themselves and their learning
- Based on our most recent parental questionnaire, 100% of parents agree that their child makes good progress and would recommend our school to other parents.
- Practice is improved year on year.
- Children are well prepared for the transition to Year 1, the gap between the EYFS curriculum and National Curriculum has narrowed.

Reviewing the EYFS Teaching and Learning Policy:

The Headteacher, Early Years Lead and Governors will monitor and review this policy on a regular basis to ensure it is being implemented appropriately and to take account of changing circumstances.