



Thornbury Primary School

Early Year Foundation Stage Policy

Date policy last reviewed: September 2026

Signed by: (Headteacher) _____

Signed by: (Chair of Governors): _____

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy – Foundation

School: Thornbury Primary School

Provision: One Foundation class

Number of pupils: PAN 45

Nursery provision: None

Phonics programme: Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS)

EYFS Lead: Mrs Joanna Stelmaszczyk

Headteacher: Mrs Emma Mnatell

Governor responsible for EYFS: Mrs Lynn Smith

Date approved: September 2026

Review date: September 2027

1. Policy Statement

At Thornbury Primary School, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start to their education.

Our Foundation provision provides a safe, nurturing, inclusive and stimulating environment where children develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and independence they need to become successful lifelong learners.

We recognise that children enter Foundation with different experiences, backgrounds, interests, abilities and developmental needs. As we do not have a Nursery provision, we place particular importance on understanding each child's starting point and establishing strong relationships with families and previous early years settings.

Our curriculum is ambitious for all children. It combines high-quality adult-led teaching, purposeful play, continuous provision, exploration, practical experiences and carefully planned interactions.

We follow the **Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers** and have regard to the Department for Education's non-statutory guidance, including *Development Matters*.

2. Our Foundation Provision

Thornbury Primary School has:

- one Foundation class;
- 26 Foundation pupils;
- no Nursery provision;
- a dedicated Foundation learning environment;
- access to indoor and outdoor learning opportunities;
- a qualified Foundation teacher and appropriately trained support staff;
- a systematic synthetic phonics programme using **Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS)**.

The absence of a Nursery means that we place particular emphasis on effective transition into Foundation. We work closely with parents, carers and children's previous early years providers to understand children's experiences, interests, strengths and areas for development.

3. Aims

Our EYFS provision aims to:

- provide every child with a happy, safe and secure start to school;
 - develop positive relationships and a strong sense of belonging;
 - provide an ambitious and inclusive curriculum;
 - develop children's communication, language and vocabulary;
 - foster a love of books, stories, rhymes and reading;
 - develop secure foundations in early mathematics;
 - develop children's physical skills and independence;
 - promote curiosity, creativity and problem-solving;
 - develop resilience, confidence and self-regulation;
 - support children's personal, social and emotional development;
 - develop children's understanding of themselves and the wider world;
 - provide appropriate support for children with SEND;
 - identify and address barriers to learning at the earliest opportunity;
 - work in partnership with parents and carers;
 - prepare children effectively for Year 1.
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4. Statutory EYFS Framework

The Foundation curriculum is organised around the seven areas of learning and development.

Prime areas

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

Specific areas

4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

The prime areas are particularly important because they underpin children's learning across the curriculum.

The specific areas provide important contexts through which children apply and develop their knowledge and skills.

We also promote the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and Exploring**
- **Active Learning**
- **Creating and Thinking Critically**

Our curriculum is not organised solely around the Early Learning Goals. The Early Learning Goals are assessment criteria at the end of the EYFS rather than a curriculum to be taught.

5. Curriculum Intent

At Thornbury Primary School, our Foundation curriculum is designed to give children the knowledge and experiences they need to thrive.

We want our children to become:

- confident communicators;
- enthusiastic readers;
- capable mathematicians;
- independent learners;
- resilient problem-solvers;
- kind and respectful members of the school community;
- curious explorers of the world;
- creative thinkers;
- physically confident and active children.

Our curriculum is carefully sequenced so that new knowledge builds on what children already know and continues to develop as they progress through the school.

We identify essential knowledge, vocabulary and skills and ensure that these are revisited regularly.

6. Curriculum Implementation

Children experience a balance of:

- whole-class teaching;
- small-group teaching;
- individual support;
- guided activities;
- continuous provision;
- child-initiated play;
- adult-supported play;
- outdoor learning;
- practical experiences;
- opportunities to revisit and consolidate learning.

Adults use children's interests and developmental needs to enhance provision while ensuring that the curriculum remains purposeful and ambitious.

Staff carefully consider when to:

- model;
- demonstrate;
- question;
- scaffold;
- introduce vocabulary;
- challenge;
- intervene;
- extend thinking;
- allow children to explore independently.

7. Communication and Language

Communication and language are central to our Foundation curriculum.

We provide a language-rich environment where adults:

- model high-quality spoken language;
- introduce and revisit vocabulary;
- engage children in meaningful conversations;
- listen carefully to children's ideas;
- encourage children to speak in full sentences;
- use stories, rhymes, poems and songs;
- develop listening and attention;
- encourage children to explain their thinking;
- provide opportunities for talk with adults and peers.

Vocabulary is deliberately selected and taught across the curriculum.

Children are encouraged to use new vocabulary in meaningful contexts and staff model accurate grammar and pronunciation.

Children who require additional support with speech, language or communication are identified early and appropriate interventions or professional advice are sought.

8. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We place a strong emphasis on children's wellbeing, relationships and emotional development.

Children are supported to develop:

- confidence;
- independence;
- self-regulation;
- resilience;
- emotional vocabulary;
- empathy;
- friendships;
- cooperation;
- respect;
- perseverance;
- positive attitudes towards learning.

Children are taught to recognise and talk about their feelings and to develop strategies for managing emotions.

We establish clear, consistent and age-appropriate expectations while recognising that children may require different levels of support.

Positive behaviour is promoted through strong relationships, modelling, encouragement, appropriate boundaries and restorative approaches.

9. Physical Development

Children have regular opportunities to develop gross and fine motor skills.

This includes:

- running;
- jumping;
- climbing;
- balancing;
- throwing and catching;
- movement and dance;
- outdoor physical play;
- mark-making;
- handwriting;
- cutting;
- threading;
- construction;
- manipulating small objects;
- developing independence with personal care.

Children are encouraged to understand the importance of physical activity, healthy eating, hygiene, sleep and oral health.

Physical development is prioritised both indoors and outdoors.

10. Literacy and Reading

At Thornbury Primary School, we aim to develop children who enjoy books, stories, poetry and reading.

Children experience:

- daily story time;
- high-quality children's literature;
- poetry and rhymes;
- repeated reading;
- opportunities to discuss books;
- vocabulary development;
- comprehension activities;
- phonics;
- meaningful writing opportunities;
- mark-making;
- shared writing;
- independent writing.

We encourage children to develop a love of reading alongside learning the technical skills required to become fluent readers.

11. Phonics – Essential Letters and Sounds

Thornbury Primary School uses Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) as its systematic synthetic phonics programme.

Phonics is taught systematically and consistently, following the ELS progression and using consistent terminology and pronunciation.

Children are taught to:

- hear and identify phonemes;
- recognise graphemes;
- pronounce sounds accurately;
- blend sounds to read words;
- segment words for spelling;
- read decodable sentences;
- develop increasing reading fluency; and
- apply phonics knowledge when writing.

Children are given regular opportunities to apply their phonics knowledge in reading and writing across the curriculum.

Where children are not keeping up with the expected progression, staff provide appropriate additional practice, support and intervention to help them keep up.

We share regular phonics videos via Tapestry to support learning at home. These videos enable children to revisit the sounds taught that week, including the associated rhymes, oral blending and harder-to-read-and-spell words. Parents and carers are encouraged to use these videos alongside the guidance provided by school to support their child's phonics development.

12. Reading at Home

We value the partnership between school and home in developing successful and enthusiastic readers.

Children take home reading material that supports the phonics taught in school and enables them to practise their developing reading skills.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- listen to their child read regularly;
- practise the sounds taught in school;
- discuss stories, illustrations and pictures;
- read a wide range of books for pleasure;
- talk about new vocabulary;
- encourage children to retell, discuss and respond to stories.

We encourage families to share books and stories together, even when children are still developing their decoding skills. Reading aloud to children provides valuable opportunities to develop vocabulary, comprehension, listening skills and a love of reading. This is supported through our Friday Story Morning, when families are invited into school to share books together and celebrate the joy of reading.

We also offer parent workshops and share regular phonics and reading videos via Tapestry to support families in developing reading and phonics skills at home.

13. Mathematics

Our Foundation mathematics curriculum develops children's secure understanding of number and mathematical relationships.

Children develop knowledge and skills relating to:

- counting;
- subitising;
- comparing quantities;
- composition of numbers;

- number bonds;
- addition and subtraction;
- pattern;
- shape;
- space;
- measure;
- mathematical reasoning.

Mathematics is taught explicitly and reinforced through continuous provision and everyday experiences.

Children are encouraged to explain their mathematical thinking using appropriate vocabulary.

We prioritise secure understanding and depth of learning rather than rushing children through content.

14. Understanding the World

Children develop an understanding of:

- themselves and their families;
- their local community;
- different cultures and traditions;
- similarities and differences between people;
- the natural world;
- animals and plants;
- seasons and weather;
- materials;
- technology;
- significant people and events;
- different environments and places.

Children learn through first-hand experiences, observation, books, visitors, visits, experiments, maps, photographs, artefacts and discussion.

We provide positive representation of the diverse society in which children live.

15. Expressive Arts and Design

Children are encouraged to express themselves through:

- painting;
- drawing;
- collage;
- sculpture;

- music;
- singing;
- dance;
- drama;
- role play;
- imaginative play;
- construction;
- exploration of colour, texture and materials.

We value children's ideas and creativity and do not expect every child to produce an identical finished product.

16. Continuous Provision

Our indoor and outdoor environments are carefully planned to promote:

- independence;
- curiosity;
- creativity;
- problem-solving;
- communication;
- collaboration;
- purposeful play;
- application of knowledge.

Resources are accessible, well organised and regularly reviewed.

Provision is enhanced in response to identified learning needs, while maintaining a clear focus on the intended curriculum.

17. Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning is an integral part of Foundation.

Children have regular opportunities to:

- develop gross motor skills;
- investigate nature;
- explore seasonal change;
- develop imaginative play;
- take appropriate risks;
- solve problems;
- collaborate;
- explore space;
- apply learning from the classroom.

Outdoor learning contributes to all seven areas of learning.

18. Inclusion and SEND

Thornbury Primary School is committed to an inclusive Foundation curriculum.

Children with SEND are supported through the school's graduated approach and SEND procedures.

We work closely with:

- parents and carers;
- the SENCO;
- previous early years providers;
- external professionals;
- health professionals;
- speech and language services;
- other relevant agencies.

Reasonable adjustments and targeted support are provided where appropriate.

We recognise that children may demonstrate learning in different ways and that developmental progress is not always linear.

19. Equality, Diversity and Belonging

Every child is valued and respected.

Our curriculum reflects a diverse range of:

- cultures;
- ethnicities;
- languages;
- religions and beliefs;
- family structures;
- abilities;
- communities;
- traditions.

We challenge stereotypes and discriminatory language or behaviour in an age-appropriate way.

We want every Foundation child to feel that they belong at Thornbury Primary School.

20. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All Foundation staff follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and current statutory requirements.

Staff must:

- know the school's safeguarding procedures;
- understand how to report concerns;
- maintain professional boundaries;
- maintain appropriate supervision;
- complete required safeguarding training;
- recognise signs of abuse and neglect;
- record and report concerns appropriately;
- understand whistleblowing procedures.

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mrs Emma Mantell

21. Paediatric First Aid

Thornbury Primary School will ensure that appropriate paediatric first-aid arrangements are in place for the Foundation class.

A person with a current appropriate paediatric first-aid qualification will be available in accordance with the EYFS statutory requirements.

The school maintains records of:

- staff holding paediatric first-aid qualifications;
- qualification dates;
- renewal dates;
- relevant refresher training;
- arrangements for ensuring appropriate first-aid cover.

First-aid arrangements will be considered during:

- normal classroom provision;
 - outdoor learning;
 - lunchtime and snack arrangements;
 - educational visits;
 - school trips;
 - staff absence.
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22. Safer Eating and Mealtimes

The school recognises that mealtimes are an important part of children's health, wellbeing and safeguarding.

Children will be appropriately supervised when eating and drinking.

Staff will:

- be aware of allergies and dietary requirements;
 - follow individual healthcare plans;
 - supervise children appropriately;
 - encourage children to sit safely while eating;
 - promote healthy food and drink;
 - support children's independence;
 - follow choking-prevention procedures;
 - respond appropriately to any concerns.
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23. Safer Sleep and Rest – 2026

Thornbury Primary School does not provide a routine sleep provision for Foundation children.

However, we recognise that a child may occasionally fall asleep, become unusually tired or require a period of rest.

Where this occurs, staff will:

- consider the child's individual circumstances;
- ensure the child is in a safe and appropriate environment;
- maintain appropriate supervision;
- ensure the child remains within sight and hearing of staff where required;
- consider whether there may be an underlying health or wellbeing concern;
- contact parents/carers where appropriate;
- follow any individual medical or healthcare advice.

The updated EYFS framework from **1 September 2026** brings safer-sleep requirements explicitly into the statutory framework. Staff are familiar with current safer-sleep guidance.

24. Screen Use and Digital Technology – 2026

Thornbury Primary School recognises that digital technology is part of children's lives and can have a useful role in learning when used appropriately.

From September 2026, the EYFS framework requires providers to have regard to Department for Education guidance concerning children's screen use in early years settings.

Our approach is that technology should **support learning rather than replace active, social, creative and practical experiences**.

Screen use in Foundation will therefore:

- have a clear purpose;
- support identified learning;
- be balanced with active and hands-on experiences;
- be appropriately supervised;
- be age appropriate;
- be reviewed by staff;
- not replace adult interaction;
- not replace outdoor play or physical activity.

Appropriate uses may include:

- researching a question;
- listening to a story;
- viewing a relevant educational resource;
- recording children's ideas;
- taking photographs of learning;
- creating digital artwork;
- exploring music;
- using appropriate interactive learning resources.

Screen use will not routinely be used as a reward, punishment or behaviour-management strategy.

Children will continue to have extensive opportunities for physical activity, outdoor learning, imaginative play, practical mathematics, handwriting, construction, creative activities, reading and conversation.

25. Health, Safety and Welfare

The school meets the health, safety and welfare requirements of the EYFS.

Particular attention is given to:

- supervision;
- first aid;
- paediatric first aid;
- allergies;
- medical needs;
- safer eating;
- choking prevention;
- hygiene;

- toileting;
 - intimate care;
 - medication;
 - outdoor safety;
 - risk assessment;
 - emergency procedures;
 - collection arrangements;
 - online safety;
 - safe use of technology.
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26. Toileting and Intimate Care

We recognise that children develop independence with toileting at different rates.

Staff support children sensitively and respectfully.

The school:

- promotes independence;
 - protects children's dignity and privacy;
 - follows appropriate safeguarding procedures;
 - communicates with parents/carers where concerns arise;
 - makes reasonable adjustments for children with SEND;
 - follows individual healthcare plans where required.
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27. Relationships with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are children's first educators and are important partners in their learning.

We establish positive relationships through:

- transition meetings;
- information sharing;
- parent/carer meetings;
- informal communication;
- workshops;
- sharing children's achievements;
- home-learning opportunities;
- discussions about children's interests and development.

As Thornbury Primary School has no Nursery provision, information from previous settings is particularly valuable in helping us understand children's starting points.

28. Transition into Foundation

Effective transition is a priority.

Where appropriate, the school will:

- communicate with previous early years settings;
- gather information about children's development;
- meet parents and carers;
- provide opportunities for children to visit school;
- provide photographs, videos and information about the classroom;
- identify children who may need additional transition support;
- establish relationships with families before children start.

We recognise that some children may require a more gradual or personalised transition.

29. Assessment

Assessment is used to understand children's learning and inform teaching.

Our assessment approach is:

- proportionate;
- purposeful;
- child-centred;
- manageable;
- based on professional judgement.

Staff use:

- observations;
- conversations;
- interactions;
- children's work;
- information from families;
- information from previous settings;
- professional discussion.

Assessment is not used as a tick-list or to create unnecessary paperwork.

Teachers use assessment information to identify:

- what children know;
- what children understand;
- what children can do;
- misconceptions;
- gaps in learning;
- appropriate next steps.

30. Reception Baseline Assessment

Thornbury Primary School completes the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) in accordance with national requirements.

The baseline assessment does not replace ongoing assessment.

31. EYFS Profile

At the end of the Foundation year, teachers complete the EYFS Profile in accordance with statutory requirements.

Teachers make professional judgements about children's attainment against the Early Learning Goals. (ELG)

The Early Learning Goals are assessment criteria rather than a curriculum.

Parents and carers are informed of their child's EYFS Profile outcomes.

Information about children's strengths and areas for development is shared with Year 1 staff to support effective transition.

32. Transition to Year 1

Foundation and Year 1 staff work collaboratively to ensure a smooth and effective transition for children as they move into Year 1.

Information shared may include:

- children's strengths and achievements;
- areas requiring further development;
- SEND information and identified needs;
- communication and language needs;
- phonics knowledge and reading development;
- mathematical understanding;
- personal, social and emotional development;
- relevant family information; and
- children's interests and individual needs.

During the summer term, children **have two transition days**, when they visit their new teacher and spend time in their new classroom. This provides opportunities for children to become familiar with their new environment, routines and adults before moving into Year 1.

All children are provided with a **transition book** to support them in preparing for the move to their new class. The transition process is adapted where necessary to meet individual children's needs and to support a positive and successful start to Year 1.

33. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that:

- statutory EYFS requirements are met;
- appropriate staffing and resources are available;
- safeguarding requirements are implemented;
- staff receive appropriate training;
- EYFS provision is monitored.

EYFS Lead

The EYFS/Foundation Lead is responsible for:

- leading the Foundation curriculum;
- ensuring statutory requirements are met;
- supporting staff development;
- monitoring children's learning;
- supporting assessment;
- overseeing provision;
- working with the SENCO and DSL;
- supporting transition;
- evaluating and improving EYFS practice.

Foundation Teacher

The Foundation teacher is responsible for:

- planning and delivering high-quality teaching;
- knowing the children well;
- assessing learning;
- adapting provision;
- supporting inclusion;
- maintaining an effective learning environment;
- working with parents and carers;
- identifying additional needs;
- contributing to transition.

Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants are expected to:

- develop positive relationships with children;
 - support children's learning;
 - promote independence;
 - model appropriate language;
 - support continuous provision;
 - contribute to assessment;
 - maintain safeguarding standards.
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34. Staff Training and Professional Development

The school is committed to maintaining high-quality EYFS practice. Staff training will include, where appropriate:

- EYFS statutory requirements;
 - safeguarding;
 - paediatric first aid;
 - safer sleep;
 - safer eating;
 - screen use;
 - SEND;
 - early reading and phonics;
 - early mathematics;
 - communication and language;
 - behaviour and self-regulation;
 - health and safety.
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35. Monitoring and Evaluation

The EYFS Lead and Senior Leadership Team will monitor the quality of Foundation provision through:

- learning walks;
- observations of teaching and adult interactions;
- curriculum reviews;
- discussion with staff;
- review of children's learning;
- assessment information;
- pupil voice;
- parent/carers feedback;
- staff feedback;
- professional development.

Monitoring will focus on improving children's experiences and outcomes and will not create unnecessary workload.

36. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where statutory guidance changes.

Policy approved: September 2026

Next review: September 2027

Headteacher: _____

Chair of Governors: _____

EYFS/Foundation Lead: _____
