



PLYMOUTH COLLEGE

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Last reviewed:	June 2026
Next review date:	August 2027
Responsibility:	Head of EYFS

The EYFS Policy is founded on the educational aims and ethos of Plymouth College.

Introduction

The aim of our Early Years Department is to ensure that all children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the range of knowledge and skills needed for them to progress through school and to prepare them for life beyond Plymouth College. We endeavour to create a fun-filled, exciting environment with topic-based learning in which children are encouraged to become independent learners through play, exploration, teacher-led, and child-initiated activities. We make an early start with literacy and numeracy understanding.

Aims

1. To provide a caring, safe and health-promoting environment for all pupils, staff and parents / guardians.
2. To promote pupils' happiness, well-being and confidence.
3. To ensure quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
4. To ensure close partnership between parents and practitioners.
5. To ensure that every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
6. To encourage all pupils to develop to their full potential. At Plymouth College, equal importance is given to academic studies, sport, the arts and other extracurricular activities.
7. To encourage pupils to set themselves the highest standards of courtesy and behaviour.
8. To encourage all pupils to be tolerant and good citizens, following the Plymouth College Principles which encompass British Values, such as democracy, tolerance, respect and individual liberty.

Legislation

This policy is based on welfare requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2025.

Structure of the EYFS

Four qualified teachers, Miss Fiona McWilliam, Mrs Stacey Dutta, Mrs Florence Lister and Mrs Lisa Moulding, with the support of level three qualified classroom assistants, lead the Early Years' Department. Specialist teachers in PE, swimming and music also teach the children.

Preschool

The Preschool class is open to children of 3 and 4 years of age. All Preschool pupils can attend for any combination of full and half days, increasing the amount of time as they become ready for the challenges of school life.

Reception

Reception children attend full-time and are introduced to a school day with assemblies and set play times.

Eligible parents will be able to access their funded entitlement hours.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

We follow the statutory curriculum requirements as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework that applies from September 2025. In planning and guiding children's activities, our practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The four themes are:

- A unique child – every child is a competent learner
- Positive relationships – children learn to be strong and independent
- Enabling environments – supporting and extending a child's development
- Learning and Development – three prime and four specific areas of learning and development

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, the three prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to form relationships and thrive.

The three prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

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

These are also underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning which are:

Playing and exploring

- Engagement – finding out and exploring is concerned with the child's open-ended hands-on experiences, which result from innate curiosity and provide raw sensory material from which the child builds concepts, tests ideas and finds out.
- Using what they know in their play describes how children use play to bring together their current understandings, combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways. Representing experiences through imaginative play supports the development of narrative thought, the ability to see from other perspectives, and symbolic thinking.
- Being willing to have a go refers to the child finding an interest, initiating activities, seeking challenge, having a 'can do' attitude, being willing to take a risk in new experiences, and developing the view of failures as opportunities to learn.

Active learning

- Motivation – being involved and concentrating describes the intensity of attention that arises from children concentrating on following a line of interest in their activities.
- Keeping on trying – refers to the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties – an element of purposeful control, which supports resilience.
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do refers to the reward of meeting one's own goals, building on the intrinsic motivation, which supports long-term success, rather than relying on the approval of others.

Creating and thinking critically

- Thinking – having their own ideas covers the critical area of creativity – generating new ideas and approaches in all areas of endeavour. Being inventive allows children to find new problems as they seek challenges, and to explore ways of solving these.
 - Using what they already know to learn new things refers to the way in which children develop and link concepts, find meaning in sequence, cause and effect and in the intentions of others through both narrative and scientific modes of thought.
 - Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways involves approaching goal-directed activity in organised ways, making choices and decisions about how to approach tasks, planning and monitoring what to do and being able to change strategies.

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively across all areas of learning, as well as offering them opportunities to develop their cultural capital. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable learning experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Staff develop a strong continuous provision, and then plan enhanced provision and additional adult directed activities to support this. As children progress through the early years foundation stage, key group work, adult-directed and whole class work will be planned, as appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils.

Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for their next stage of education.

Assessment

At Plymouth College, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents. We use Tapestry to complete and share observations. Within the first four weeks that a child starts Preschool or Reception, staff will administer an entry assessment. At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development or,
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents. The results are then shared with parents and submitted to the local authority.

Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents. Parents are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. 'Settling in' and progress reports are sent home each term and these, along with the EYFS profile, help to provide parents with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. They support parents in guiding their child's learning at home and help families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Our Community

Every child who joins Plymouth College Early Years department becomes a part of the whole school community. We greatly value our relationships with the parents as we see each child's journey through their primary years as a team collaboration. We encourage parents to join us at many events throughout the year including our Nativity and summer concert, Sports days and open classroom sessions.

Plymouth College caters for children with food allergies and intolerances; parents should advise our registrar of these when joining and inform us of any updates.

The principles upheld in the Early Years Department are enshrined in our school value system and we would encourage you to look at our whole school policies to see how we build on the excellent foundations laid during this crucial stage in children's education.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We promote good health, including oral health, in the early years through our curriculum. Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.