

Holbeton Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy 2026

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Introduction

This Early Years Foundation Stage policy for Holbeton Primary School aligns with the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school-based providers. The current GOV.UK result states that the EYFS statutory framework sets the standards that school and childcare providers must meet for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five, and that the updated group and school-based framework is effective from 1 September 2025.



The Early Years Foundation Stage is a vital stage in each child's development. At Holbeton Primary School, we believe that children deserve the best possible start in life, with secure relationships, high-quality teaching, rich language, purposeful play and meaningful experiences that help them grow as confident, curious and resilient learners.

Our school motto, "Small but Mighty - Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns Grow," reflects our belief that every child has the potential to flourish. Holbeton school is a small, welcoming rural primary school with a distinctive outdoor-rich curriculum built around learning in the forest, on the farm and at the beach.

Our EYFS provision includes Nursery-aged children from 3+ and Reception children taught within a mixed-age class alongside Year 1 children. Nursery and



Reception children follow the EYFS. Year 1 children follow the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum, with developmentally appropriate provision used where this supports transition, independence, confidence and learning.

Meeting the individual needs of all children lies at the heart of our EYFS practice. At Holbeton, we aim to

provide personalised learning, development and care so that every child feels safe, known, valued and ready for the next stage of their education.

Guiding Principles

Our EYFS practice is shaped by the four guiding principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

A Unique Child

Every child is a unique individual. Children learn and develop at different rates, and each child brings their own experiences, interests, strengths and needs. We value every child and work to ensure that they become resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through warm, secure and positive relationships. Adults at Holbeton build trusting relationships with children and families. Staff model kindness, respect, curiosity, emotional regulation and positive learning behaviours.

Enabling Environments

Children learn well in enabling environments where adults respond to their individual interests and needs. Our indoor and outdoor environments are planned to promote independence, exploration, talk, creativity, problem-solving and purposeful play.

Learning and Development

Children learn and develop in different ways. Our curriculum and provision reflect the importance of play, direct teaching, adult modelling, guided learning, observation, talk, rehearsal and meaningful experience. We support all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, to make progress from their starting points.

Implementation of EYFS Principles at Holbeton

In line with EYFS principles, Holbeton Primary School will:

- provide a safe, secure and nurturing learning environment indoors and outdoors;
- adopt a key person approach so that each child is known well;
- develop strong relationships with parents and carers;

- plan challenging and enjoyable learning experiences based on children's needs, interests, development and prior learning;
- provide a balance of adult-led, adult-guided and child-initiated learning;
- promote children's independence, self-regulation, confidence and resilience;
- ensure that children have access to high-quality language, stories, songs, rhymes and vocabulary;
- provide systematic teaching of phonics and early reading;
- support early mark-making, transcription, composition and mathematical thinking;
- make purposeful use of Holbeton's outdoor curriculum, including forest, farm and beach experiences;
- promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice;
- support children with SEND and additional needs through early identification, adaptation and partnership with families;
- prepare children well for transition into Reception, Year 1 and beyond.

Structure of the EYFS at Holbeton

Holbeton Primary School's EYFS provision is part of a mixed-age class that includes:

- Nursery-aged children from 3+;
- Reception children;
- Year 1 children.

The mixed-age model enables children to learn with and from one another. Younger children benefit from seeing older children model language, routines and learning behaviours. Older children develop confidence, leadership, communication and independence. Staff plan carefully so that each child accesses learning that is appropriate to their age, stage, needs and curriculum entitlement.

Nursery and Reception children access the EYFS curriculum. Year 1 children access the Key Stage 1 curriculum and are supported through appropriate teaching, routines, provision and transition practice.

Curriculum

Our EYFS curriculum is broad, ambitious and carefully sequenced. It is designed to help children build secure foundations for future learning. It supports children to develop knowledge, skills, vocabulary, confidence, independence and positive attitudes to learning.

The EYFS curriculum is organised through seven areas of learning and development.

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At Holbeton, the EYFS curriculum is enriched by:

- high-quality story, rhyme, song and text experiences;
- planned vocabulary development;
- early phonics and reading;
- early writing, mark-making and fine motor development;
- practical mathematics and problem-solving;
- outdoor learning through forest, farm and beach experiences;
- creative, imaginative and physical experiences;
- local community links and real-life learning;
- direct teaching and purposeful provision;
- opportunities for children to revisit, practise and deepen learning.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Staff reflect on the characteristics of effective teaching and learning when planning, observing and supporting children.

Children are supported to develop as learners through:

Playing and Exploring

Children investigate, experience things, make choices, follow interests and "have a go".

Active Learning

Children concentrate, keep trying, overcome difficulties and take pride in their achievements.

Creating and Thinking Critically

Children develop their own ideas, make links, solve problems and test different ways of doing things.

At Holbeton, adults promote these characteristics through quality interactions, carefully planned environments, meaningful challenges and opportunities for children to practise independence.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching in EYFS includes a balance of:

- direct teaching;
- adult modelling;
- adult-guided learning;
- high-quality interactions;
- child-initiated learning;
- purposeful play;
- focused group work;
- individual support;
- outdoor and experiential learning.

Staff use observation and assessment to understand what children know, can do and need next. Adults adapt teaching and provision so that all children can access learning and make progress.

In the mixed-age class, staff use flexible grouping so that Nursery, Reception and Year 1 children receive appropriate teaching. Some learning may be taught as a whole class where this is suitable. Other learning is taught in smaller groups or individually according to age, stage, curriculum entitlement and need.

Adults support children by:

- modelling language and thinking;
- asking questions that develop understanding;
- introducing and revisiting vocabulary;
- modelling social skills and learning behaviours;
- supporting independence and self-regulation;
- guiding play and extending learning;
- identifying misconceptions and next steps;
- adapting activities and resources.

Communication, Language and Vocabulary

Communication and language are central to EYFS practice at Holbeton. Staff intentionally develop children's spoken language, understanding, vocabulary and confidence.

We provide:

- high-quality adult-child interactions;
- frequent story, song, rhyme and poetry experiences;
- rich conversations during play and routines;
- explicit vocabulary teaching;
- role play and imaginative learning;
- opportunities for children to explain, describe, reason and wonder;
- support for children with speech, language and communication needs.

Adults model full sentences, careful listening and respectful conversation. Children are encouraged to use new vocabulary in a range of contexts and to express their ideas, feelings and thinking.

Early Reading, Phonics and Writing

Early reading is a priority at Holbeton. Children are supported to develop a love of books, stories, rhymes and language.

Phonics is taught systematically through the school's chosen phonics programme. 'Little Wandle' [Letters and Sounds | A complete Phonics resource to support children](#).

Nursery children develop early phonological awareness through:

- listening games;
- environmental sounds;
- rhythm and rhyme;
- oral blending;
- alliteration;
- sound discrimination;
- stories, songs and poems.

Reception children receive systematic phonics teaching and opportunities to apply phonics through reading and writing. Year 1 children continue to receive phonics teaching and targeted support according to need.

Writing develops through:

- gross and fine motor activity;
- mark-making;
- drawing;
- oral rehearsal;
- shared writing;
- adult modelling;
- phonics application;
- handwriting and letter formation;
- purposeful writing within provision.

Mathematics

Mathematics in EYFS is practical, meaningful and language-rich. Children develop early mathematical understanding through direct teaching, play, routines, songs, stories, games, manipulatives and real-life problem-solving.

Children are supported to develop:

- counting;
- subitising;
- comparison;
- number composition;
- pattern;
- shape;
- space;
- measure;
- mathematical language;
- problem-solving and reasoning.

Assessment

Assessment in EYFS is ongoing, purposeful and manageable. Staff use their professional knowledge of children, observations, interactions, discussions with families and children's work to identify what children know, understand and can do.

Assessment is used to:

- identify starting points;
- plan next steps;
- adapt teaching and provision;
- identify gaps or barriers;
- monitor progress;
- support children with SEND or additional needs;
- inform discussions with parents and carers;
- support transition;
- complete statutory assessments.

Reception children complete statutory assessment arrangements as required, including the Reception Baseline Assessment and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of Reception.

Assessment does not rely on excessive evidence gathering. Staff focus on knowing children well and using assessment to improve learning.

Inclusion, Equality and SEND

Holbeton Primary School is committed to ensuring that every child is included, supported and able to access the curriculum. We provide equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

Staff will:

- identify needs early;
- work with parents and carers;
- adapt teaching and provision;
- provide targeted support;
- involve the SENDCo where appropriate;
- seek external advice when needed;
- use individual plans and provision maps where relevant;
- review progress and support regularly;
- promote independence and confidence.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Children's safety and welfare are paramount. All staff are responsible for safeguarding children and must follow school and Trust safeguarding procedures.

Staff will:

- act immediately on concerns;
- record concerns using CPOMS;
- follow the WeST Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- follow safer recruitment and low-level concerns procedures;
- supervise children appropriately;
- ensure safe indoor and outdoor provision;
- promote online safety;

- follow procedures for first aid, medicines, intimate care and accidents;
- monitor attendance and follow up absence;
- ensure safe collection arrangements.
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Staff:Child Ratios and Supervision

Holbeton Primary School will comply with the current EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers and will ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and keep them safe.

Staffing decisions will take account of:

- children's ages;
- developmental needs;
- SEND;
- medical or personal care needs;
- the activity taking place;
- indoor and outdoor learning environments;
- staff qualifications;
- the needs of individual children;
- the mixed-age nature of the class.

Holbeton will deploy additional adults where needed to ensure children's safety, welfare, inclusion and access to learning. This may include additional support for SEND, medical needs, personal care, regulation, outdoor learning, educational visits, lunchtimes, transitions and higher-risk activities.

For educational visits, Forest School, farm, beach and other off-site learning, staffing will be determined through risk assessment and that the appropriate ratio on a visit may be higher than the legal minimum required for on-site supervision.

At least one person with a current paediatric first aid certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings.

Health, Safety and Well-being

Staff ensure that children learn and play in a safe, clean and well-organised environment. Daily practice includes:

- checks of indoor and outdoor provision;
- safe use and storage of equipment;
- hygiene routines;
- handwashing and toileting support;
- safe food and drink routines;
- accident reporting;
- first aid procedures;
- risk assessment for activities and visits;
- promotion of healthy choices;
- support for emotional well-being.

Medicines are managed in line with school procedures.

Behaviour, Relationships and Self-Regulation

Behaviour in EYFS is taught, modelled and practised. Children are supported to understand what it means to be safe, respectful and ready.

Adults will:

- build warm and trusting relationships;
- teach routines explicitly;
- use visual prompts and modelling;
- support children to recognise and manage emotions;
- help children resolve conflict;
- use praise and encouragement;
- provide developmentally appropriate support;
- adapt approaches for children with SEND or social, emotional and mental health needs;
- work with parents and carers where additional support is needed.

Working with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are children's first educators. We value strong partnerships with families and work together to support children's learning, development and well-being.

We will:

- provide welcoming transition arrangements;
- gather information about each child before and during entry;
- communicate regularly with parents and carers;
- share information about learning and development;
- support home reading and phonics practice;
- discuss concerns early;
- involve parents and carers in SEND support and review;
- celebrate children's progress.

Transition

Transitions are planned carefully to support children's confidence and readiness.

This includes:

- transition into Nursery;
- transition into Reception;
- transition within the mixed-age class;
- transition from Reception into Year 1;
- transition for children joining mid-year;
- enhanced transition for children with SEND, medical needs or vulnerabilities;
- communication with families and, where relevant, previous settings.

Because Nursery, Reception and Year 1 children learn within one mixed-age class, transition is treated as a continuous process. Children are supported to develop independence, routines, confidence and curriculum readiness over time.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher, Sarah Honywill, has overall responsibility for strategic leadership, safeguarding, SEND, staffing, statutory compliance and monitoring of EYFS provision.

EYFS Lead

The EYFS Lead, Helena Clews, supports the quality of EYFS curriculum, provision, assessment, routines, adult interactions, transition and improvement priorities.

SENDCo

The SENDCo, Sarah Honywill, supports staff to identify needs early, adapt provision, work with families and coordinate provision for children with SEND.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Sarah Honywill, leads safeguarding practice and ensures that concerns are responded to and recorded in line with school and Trust procedures.

All EYFS Staff

All staff working in EYFS are responsible for ensuring that children are safe, well cared for, included and supported to make progress from their individual starting points.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and EYFS Lead will monitor EYFS provision through:

- learning walks;
- review of provision;
- professional discussion;
- child voice;
- parent feedback;
- assessment information;
- pupil progress meetings;

Trust support and review.

Monitoring will focus on the quality of curriculum, teaching, interactions, assessment, provision, inclusion, safeguarding, phonics, early language, writing, mathematics, independence and transition.

Appendix 1: Linked Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside:

- WeST Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Holbeton Relationship and Behaviour Policy;

Holbeton Intimate Care procedures;

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if statutory guidance changes.