

Maidensbridge Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Policy Date	Review	Reviewed By	Date Approved By Governors
September 2026	September 2028	Mrs Gaynor Morgan and Mrs Catharine Pryde	9.9.2026

Version 8

The Early Years Foundation Stage at Maidensbridge Primary School

This document provides an overview of the policy, philosophy and practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Maidensbridge. It outlines our intentions in the EYFS and how we implement this within our provision.

"The education of even a very small child does not aim for preparing him for school but for life."
Maria Montessori, 1967

Vision

Our vision is to provide a safe and caring environment where every child feels valued, develops resilience, builds lasting friendships and is inspired to achieve their best through a love of learning.

Intent

The intent for our children is to enter the Early Years stage of their education ready to embrace new challenges with confidence and a positive mindset.

We engage our pupils in a stimulating environment led by the children yet carefully organised and managed by adults.

We provide a curriculum that is responsive to individual starting points and needs.

We encourage our children to take the lead in their own learning with confidence to explore new ideas, think about problems, take risks and seek challenge.

We develop high levels of engagement, curiosity, collaboration and co-operation.

We build confidence. Ensuring children respect the opinions and values of themselves and others.

Implementation

Our approach is influenced by the work of educationalists, researchers, psychologists and practitioners who have guided our knowledge of how children learn and how adults can support their learning.

"Knowledgeable practitioners appreciate that adult-led learning offers a child something different from, but complementary to, child led learning and it is one without the other that leads to an impoverished educational experience."

Fisher, 2016

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to ensure children develop the foundational knowledge, language and skills they need to succeed in later learning. Through high-quality interactions, meaningful experiences and responsive teaching, practitioners build upon what children already know and can do. We follow the EYFS Framework (2026) for

group and school-based providers. Within this framework there are four overarching principles which shape our practice.

These principles are as follows:

1. Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong through **positive relationships**. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/ carers.
3. Children learn and develop well in **enabling environment** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and help them to build their learning over time.
4. Children **develop and learn** at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our curriculum encompasses the seven areas of learning and development from the framework. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These three *prime* areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened through the four specific areas. The specific areas are:

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

Throughout their time in Nursery, Pre-school and Reception, our children partake in a curriculum which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards the end of Reception goals. These goals are defined as the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which are outlined in *Appendix 1*.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum at Maidensbridge Primary School are three **Characteristics of Effective Learning**. The Characteristics of Effective Learning run through and underpin all seven areas of Learning and Development.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

- **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 achieving what they set out to do.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically**- Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things themselves.

A Unique Child

At Maidensbridge, practitioners recognise children are constantly learning and that they can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Children learn in many ways and at varying rates. The Unique Child reaches out to people and things through the Characteristics of Effective Learning, which are evident in all areas of Learning and Development.

Provision

At Maidensbridge Primary School provision is a mixture of adult led and child-initiated experiences.

Adult led focused groups

Short, focused group sessions are planned with care, meeting the needs of all children using prior knowledge of the children's learning experiences. Activities will be age appropriate, enjoyable and responsive to children's interests and individual needs. Structured sessions are delivered throughout the day using the Development Matters (2021) guidance. In Pre-school and Reception structured sessions include SCARF, Read Write Inc, Developing Experts, Jigsaw RE and White Rose Hub curriculum programmes. In Nursery 1 to 3 very short adult-led sessions will take place every day which may include; story and rhyme time, turn taking games, movement and physical development or communication and language activities.

Learning through play (Child initiated and Adult initiated experiences)

At Maidensbridge practitioners firmly believe that play based learning is paramount to children's learning and development in all areas. Children's play reflects their varied and wide-ranging interests, and is where they learn at their highest level. It should be purposeful and valued; delivered through a mixture of child initiated and adult-led experiences which are essential for developing confidence.

Through play, children learn to explore and develop learning experiences, which in turn help them to make sense of the world around them. They practise and build up ideas; learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have opportunity to think creatively alongside others, as well as on their own. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually move towards more formal, adult-led activities, to help children transition into year 1.

Enabling Environments- The role of the environment

At Maidensbridge Primary School, each area of the environment is informed by assessment. As the needs of the children change and as they grow and develop, so does their learning environment. We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged.

Using resources that are open-ended, we encourage creativity, imagination and higher order thinking skills. Our continuous provision gives children the freedom to make independent choices. They are encouraged to be active learners and take control of their own learning.

Our timetables allows for long uninterrupted periods of continuous provision which allows children to reach a deep level of involvement as they engage, play, investigate and talk.

Screen Time

Screen time is used sparingly and purposefully within the Early Years Foundation Stage to enhance learning experiences. Digital devices are only used when they support educational outcomes and do not replace hands-on, practical learning, active play, social interaction, outdoor experiences, or direct adult-child engagement. Any screen-based activities are age-appropriate, closely supervised, and balanced with a wide range of play-based learning opportunities to support children's overall development and wellbeing.

"High levels of attainment come from high-level engagement."

Alistair Bryce-Clegg, 2015

The role of the adult

Young children learn from those they trust and with those who foster enthusiasm for learning." Trevarthen, 2002

Research shows that progress will be significantly enhanced by the effective support of adults within a high-quality learning environment.

At Maidensbridge Primary School, the role of the adult, particularly during continuous provision, is based upon the work of Marion Dowling and her book on supporting sustained shared thinking (2005).

Within our setting interactions between children and adults will include:

- Tuning into what is happening or a child's thinking
- Showing genuine interest
- Respecting children's own decisions and choices
- Inviting children to elaborate
- Recapping on what has happened so far
- Offering personal experience
- Clarifying ideas
- Reminding
- Using specific praise
- Offering an alternative viewpoint
- Speculating/ using 'I wonder if ...'
- Developing and extending their learning and interests
- Incorporating their learning into their play

Key Person

Every child will be assigned a key person who will help ensure that their learning and care are tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person will support the child in becoming familiar with the setting, build a secure relationship with the child and their family, and act as the main point of contact for parents and carers. They will monitor the child's development, contribute to observations and assessments, and work in partnership with parents to support the child's wellbeing, learning and development. Where the key person is absent, an alternative practitioner will provide continuity of care. The setting recognises that warm, responsive and consistent relationships are fundamental to children's emotional security, confidence and success in learning.

Mealtimes

Mealtimes are positive social experiences that support children's health, wellbeing and development. Meal and snack times provide opportunities for children to develop communication skills, social interaction and healthy attitudes towards food in a relaxed and nurturing environment. Children will always be closely supervised by a suitable member of staff when eating or drinking. Staff will remain vigilant throughout meal and snack times, positioning themselves so that all children can be seen and heard. Children will never be left unattended while eating or drinking, and practitioners will be familiar with choking response procedures and paediatric first aid requirements.

Staff will encourage children to sit appropriately, eat at their own pace and develop independence skills while providing support where needed. As part of the settling-in process, parents and carers will be provided with information and guidance regarding healthy lunch box choices as outlined in the school's PSHE policy to support their child's wellbeing, independence and enjoyment of mealtimes. Families will receive recommendations on suitable foods and drinks and safe food storage and preparation.

Fresh drinking water will be available throughout the day, and healthy snacks will be provided each day to support children's health, wellbeing and development. Snacks will be nutritious, varied and appropriate to children's age and stage of development. All allergies, dietary requirements, cultural preferences and medical needs will be carefully considered when planning and providing snacks. Staff will promote good hygiene practices before and after eating and will supervise children closely during snack times to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Inclusion/ Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and their families are valued at Maidensbridge. Children are treated as individuals; they have equal access to the available provision and are encouraged to achieve their personal best. Learning opportunities are designed to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child effectively. If a child's progress gives cause for concern at any stage of their journey, practitioners share concerns with parents/ carers at the earliest opportunity and in collaboration with the SENCO and/or other specialist agencies, agree how best to support the child.

At Maidensbridge, practitioners meet the needs of all of our children by:

- Considering the individual needs, interests and stages of development of the children in the class.
- Planning challenging and enjoyable opportunities which build upon and extend children's knowledge and experiences, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources which reflect cultural diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.

Medication Administration

The school is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all children. Medication will only be administered to a child when it is necessary and where a child has been prescribed medicine where a dosage MUST be taken during the school day (4 dosages per day). Parents/carers must sign a consent form at the school office to enable a member of staff to administer it. Prescription medicines must be provided in the

original container with the child's name, dosage and instructions clearly displayed. Administered medications will be recorded on Medical Tracker.

Medicines will be stored safely and securely in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and out of the reach of children. Any medication requiring refrigeration will be stored in a designated medical refrigerator.

Children with long-term medical conditions or allergies will be supported through individual healthcare plans, developed in partnership with parents and relevant health professionals. Emergency medication, such as inhalers, adrenaline auto-injectors or epilepsy medication, will be readily accessible and managed in line with the child's healthcare plan.

The school follows the requirements of the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** and the **Department for Education guidance: Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions**, ensuring that children's medical needs are met safely and effectively while allowing them to fully participate in school life.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society. For further information, please see the school **Equal Opportunities Policy**.

Parent Partnership

Parents are the first and most important influence on their child's development and future outcomes. Children have two main educators in their lives- their parents and their teachers. Therefore, the school and the parents all have crucial roles to play. The impact on a child's education is greater if parents and schools work in partnership.

At Maidensbridge, parents are invited to be involved in every step of a child's journey in education.

We promote a positive partnership by:

- Home visits for our new Nursery and Pre-school children with welcome information packs.
- Induction meetings to welcome families as they enter Reception class.
- Visiting pre-school providers, for those children who haven't attended our Pre-school, to ensure continuity and progression during the EYFS.
- Operating 'Stay and Play' and 'Drop and Go' sessions in Nursery and Pre-school prior to the children starting formal sessions.
- Inviting children to attend several transition afternoons in July to spend time with the Reception Team and start to form relationships with their peers.
- An 'open door' policy to encourage an on-going dialogue with parents and carers.
- Inviting parents and carers to attend a parent consultation each term to formally discuss their child's progress.
- Providing parents and carers with a summative progress report at the academic year.
- Using the school planner in Reception to communicate messages with parents and carers on a regular basis. Parents and carers are encouraged to do the same.

- Using Tapestry in Nursery and Pre-school to communicate messages and to allow parents/carers access to their child's online learning journey, to celebrate their progress, achievements and 'wow moments'. Families are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey.
- Arranging a range of experiences throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, parents and school: open days, workshops, assemblies, visits, Sports Day etc.

Settling In

We recognise that starting Nursery, Pre-school is a significant transition for both children and their families. We are committed to providing a warm, nurturing and supportive environment where every child feels safe, secure and valued. We work closely with parents and carers to ensure children are given the time and support they need to develop confidence, build trusting relationships with adults and settle happily into the setting.

Children may be offered a flexible settling-in period based on their individual needs. Practitioners will work in partnership with parents and carers to share information about the child's interests, routines, care needs and preferences. A key person will support the child in developing secure attachments and a sense of belonging within the setting.

We understand that children settle at different rates and will respond sensitively to signs of anxiety or distress. Our approach promotes children's emotional wellbeing, confidence and resilience, helping them to feel secure and ready to learn through play and positive relationships.

The wellbeing of the child will always be our priority, and settling arrangements will be reviewed and adapted as necessary. This approach reflects EYFS expectations for building secure relationships and supporting children's emotional wellbeing.

Impact

We measure the impact of our implementation through assessment. Within continuous provision, our assessment has two key elements;

1. Observation

During continuous provision practitioners observe children to understand their interests, learning styles and stages of development and to plan experiences that will challenge and extend their existing skills.

Observation and responding to children's thinking inform our planning of experiences and opportunities, how we create our environment for thinking, the strategies the adults use to extend learning (modelling, scaffolding, questioning, discussion, shared sustained thinking) and how we capitalise knowledge of children's interests to ensure high levels of engagement.

Tapestry is used to capture 'wow' moments in Nursery and Pre-school when a child does or says something that demonstrates progress or skill in a particular area.

A continuous cycle of observation assessment and planning is embedded throughout our EYFS provision.



Formative Assessments

Every child will undergo the Statutory Baseline assessment within the first 6 weeks of them starting Reception. This is a nation-wide assessment which is used to track the progress each child makes between them first entering Primary School in Reception, to when they leave Primary School at the end of Year 6.

Summative Assessments

In addition to the continuous cycle of observation and formative assessments which informs each child's next steps, summative assessments are completed. These take place termly and inform planning of subsequent teaching and learning. Additional summative assessments using the WellComm programme, and sound recognition and understanding, using the Read, Write Inc programme. Both programmes begin in Preschool and run throughout the Early Years.

EYFS Profile

In the final term of reception, the EYFS profile will be completed for each child. Each child's level of development will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals (*Appendix 1*). Throughout the year, moderation is undertaken both internally amongst staff, and externally across a number of schools, to quality assure judgements made.

Transition into Year 1

Children enter key Stage One ready to begin the next chapter of the educational journey, specifically moving into the National Curriculum. They are equipped with a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for future progress through school and life.

The Early Years and Key Stage 1 team at Maidensbridge work closely together, hosting special days and workshops to form relationships with the children in Reception and support the transition process over a long period of time. Reception and Year 1 work collaboratively to provide integrated experiences throughout the year.

Year 1 teachers are given a copy of each child's EYFS Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

EYFS updated by: Mrs Catharine Pryde and Mrs G Morgan

Policy Review: September 2028

The Early Learning Goal Descriptors

Communication and Language

ELG- 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 conversations when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

ELG- 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 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

ELG- Self-Regulation

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly.
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.
- Give focussed attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

ELG- Managing Self

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience, and perseverance in the face of challenge.
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet, and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

ELG- Building Relationships

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

Physical Development

ELG- Gross Motor Skills

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with considerations for themselves and others.

- Demonstrate strength, balance and co-ordination when playing; move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

ELG- 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, paint brushes and cutlery.
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

Literacy

ELG-Comprehension

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

ELG- 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.

ELG-Writing

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with. Letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Mathematics

ELG-Number

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

ELG- 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 even and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

Understanding the World

ELG- Past and Present

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

ELG- People, Culture and Communities

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, nonfiction texts and maps.
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in their 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 when appropriate, maps.

ELG- 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 the seasons and changing states of matter.

Expressive Arts and Design

ELG- 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.

ELG- 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, poems, and stories with others, and when appropriate, try to move in time with music.