Overton St Helen's CE Primary School

Surrounded by God, we inspire hearts and minds through learning, faith and love.

'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven' (Matthew 5: 16)

Policy record	Details
Version and status	October 2026 update for school review and governing body approval
Policy owner	EYFS subject leader, supported by the headteacher
Approved by and date	Governing body: to be recorded on adoption
Next scheduled review	October 2028, or earlier following significant guidance or curriculum changes

EYFS Reception Class Policy

School Vision

We encourage children to be respectful, forgiving and compassionate. We are a nurturing, inclusive and safe community built on Christian values that inspire positive trusting relationships between school, families and the wider world.

We aim high, engaging children in a dynamic and diverse curriculum with opportunities and experiences that allow them to excel, through discovering their unique talents, relishing challenges with courage and perseverance, knowing that God is with them.

INTENT

Rationale

Every child deserves the best possible start in life. At Overton St Helen's School we provide high-quality early education and care, recognising that a secure, safe and happy childhood matters in its own right and provides a foundation for future learning.

This policy applies to our Reception class and implements the Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, dated 13 July 2026 and effective from 1 September 2026. It covers learning and development, assessment, and safeguarding and welfare. It is read alongside the school's safeguarding, attendance, SEND, behaviour, medicines, intimate care, online safety, educational visits and complaints procedures.

At Overton St Helen's School we believe in the development of the whole child. In our Early Years Foundation Stage we strive to provide;

- a safe and nurturing space,

- a stimulating and challenging learning environment where the children are supported by skilled and knowledgeable practitioners,

- practitioners who will carefully observe the children, looking for opportunities to have meaningful, quality interactions that will enable the children to grow and achieve in all seven areas of learning and development of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We will enable the children to develop a "sense of place" by exploring, experiencing and understanding Morecambe Bay as the place where they live.

At Overton St Helen's School we promote teaching and learning to ensure children's readiness for the next stage in their education and give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. We seek to provide:

- **quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- **a secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities that are planned around the needs and interests of each child, and are assessed and reviewed regularly
- **partnership working** between practitioners and parents
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

Aims and Objectives

" When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow" – Development Matters.

At Overton St Helen's School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children which will give them a strong foundation for their future. We aim to ensure that all our children develop into independent and lifelong learners.

The four themes of the EYFS express important principles underpinning effective practice in the care, development and learning of young children.

- **A unique child –** Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive relationships –** Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person
- **Enabling environments –** The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- Learning and development – Children develop and learn at different rates. All seven areas of learning are important and interconnected. Teaching supports children with SEND as well as their peers.

This Policy sets out how we aim to provide:

- A broad and balanced curriculum which builds upon children's interests and experiences, giving them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress throughout school and life

- A curriculum that enables the children to develop a "sense of place" by exploring, experiencing, understanding and celebrating Morecambe Bay as the place where they live.
- A stimulating and challenging learning environment which encourages high levels of engagement.
- Opportunities for children to learn through child initiated and adult supported play in all areas of learning and development.
- Adults who respond sensitively to the individual needs of the children, helping them to build upon their learning over time.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- An environment where all children can develop positive relationships and become strong, independent, confident and resilient.
- Close partnership with parents/carers, valuing their contributions.

Role of EYFS Leader

- to provide vision, direction and leadership of Early Years
- to ensure high quality early education that improves outcomes and narrows the gap between those children who are most vulnerable and the rest.
- to monitor and evaluate the impact of policies, practices, etc in the EYFS, identifying developments needed and constantly seeking strategies for improvement; working in partnership with the early years team, senior leaders and early years governor to achieve them.
- to ensure the successful development and implementation of high quality, developmentally appropriate, inclusive learning environments which promote a balance between learning through play and providing learning activities which will challenge and develop and prepare children for Year 1.
- to review assessment so that it supports timely teaching and intervention, values professional judgement and avoids unnecessary recording or excessive paperwork
- to work in partnership with senior leaders in the cycle of school evaluation and development planning
- to work with colleagues in external settings and in Year 1 to ensure high quality transitions between phases
- to monitor implementation of the statutory EYFS requirements and report priorities to senior leaders and governors
- liaising with other subject leaders to ensure they know where children begin their learning in other curriculum areas.

IMPLEMENTATION

Approaches to learning

High quality early education is important for all children. We aim to provide high-quality education and care that is inclusive and will enable all children to thrive.

The EYFS provision and practice is based on observation of the children's needs, interests and stages of development. Learning and development in Overton St Helen's School are planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances in order to provide every child with a stimulating, challenging and enjoyable experience.

In organising and implementing educational programmes, we will ensure that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to the three characteristics of effective learning:

- **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

Children learn through a combination of adult-led teaching, child-initiated learning opportunities, play-based experiences, continuous provision, and indoor and outdoor learning, ensuring the needs of all children are met and learning is appropriately tailored across the curriculum.

As part of our best practice we;

- provide high quality education for all children through a planned for, enabling learning environment which is accessible to all children.
- respond to the individual needs of all children by encouraging and supporting the development of knowledge and skills, led by the children's interests.
- seek to identify children's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) quickly and ensure that all children promptly receive any extra help they need.
- develop strong, positive, caring relationships with all children by responding sensitively to the children's needs.
- support children to identify and understand their emotional state by modelling the use of language to express how they are feeling.
- support the children and families in the transition from Nursery to School through effective communication and opportunities to visit their new setting.

The Curriculum: What we want children to learn.

The statutory educational programmes shape our curriculum across seven areas of learning and development. The aspects listed below are the Early Learning Goal headings used for assessment at the end of Reception; they do not define the whole curriculum.

All areas are important and inter-connected. There are **3 PRIME AREAS-**

- **Communication and Language**
  - Listening, Attention & Understanding
  - Speaking
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
  - Self Regulation
  - Managing Self
  - Building Relationships
- **Physical Development**
  - Gross Motor Skills
  - Fine Motor Skills

There are **4 SPECIFIC AREAS -** through which the Prime Areas are strengthened and applied.

- **Literacy**
  - Comprehension
  - Word Reading
  - Writing
- **Mathematics**
  - Number
  - Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding of the World**

- Past & Present
- People, Culture & Communities
- The Natural World

- **Expressive Arts and Design**
  - Creating with Materials
  - Being Imaginative & Expressive

To ensure we deliver a rich, broad and balanced curriculum we will:

- plan for experiences based on the children's interests to encourage and motivate their learning in all 7 areas of learning and development of the EYFS.
- provide "real" experiences that broaden the children's knowledge and understanding of their communities and the wider world.
- encourage our children to have a deep knowledge, understanding and respect for Morecambe Bay as the place where they live, through real life experiences and place-based learning.

As a church school we deliver discrete Religious Education sessions, delivered discretely within the classroom for one afternoon's session and daily access to collective worship either as whole school, Key Stage or within the class.

Pedagogy: Helping Children to Learn

As part of our best practice we help children learn in many encouraging, thoughtful and gently challenging ways;

- provide opportunities for play
- which is child-led: freely engaged and enjoyed by children
- which is sensitively supported and extended by adults
- which is guided towards specific educational outcomes
- create a rich, stimulating environment both indoors and outside, providing children with choice
- joining in with children's play where appropriate, modelling vocabulary, introducing challenges and ideas
- modelling skills
- having discussions with the children, using skilful questioning, and challenging their thinking
- directly teaching new knowledge, skills and concepts
- using scaffolding techniques: doing it for the child, offering some help, modelling, prompting and self-scaffolding to promote and support the development of Self-Regulation and Executive Function skills
- supporting language development, which is central to self-regulation, by encouraging children to use language to guide their actions and plans.
- Encouraging children to focus their thinking, persist and plan ahead**.**

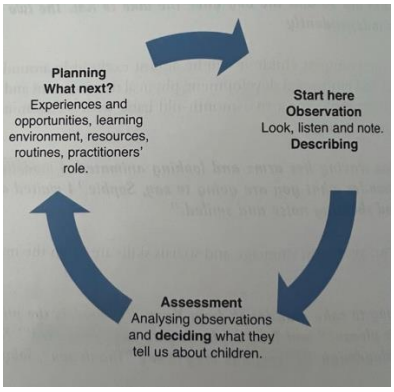
Planning

At Overton St Helen's School we are very much committed to following children's interests & fascinations, and as such our long term plan shows predicted/possible learning themes across the year and acts as a reference point for ensuring the curriculum remains broad & balanced.

We choose quality texts (Our Beloved Books), based around a broad predicted interest, as a starting point for the children's learning. Using our knowledge of the children and their interests gathered during our

assessment processes we plan for activities, experiences, enhancements and enrichments that will enable all children to progress in their learning.

We use responsive planning in the moment alongside deliberate curriculum planning and direct teaching. Practitioners observe children's play, assess their understanding and respond with well-timed interactions. Planned teaching secures essential knowledge and skills, including systematic phonics, early writing and mathematics. As children progress through Reception, there is a greater focus on the specific areas to prepare them for Key Stage 1, while maintaining play and support for the prime areas.



Taken from Planning in the Moment with Young Children by Anna Ephgrave

Learning journeys and selected examples of work may be used to celebrate learning and support dialogue with families. Photographs, written observations and portfolios are not required to prove professional judgements. Recording must not take practitioners away from sustained, high-quality interactions with children.

Learning Environment

We believe that a learning environment should respond to each child's need for something familiar, something new and challenging and something which enables him or her to pursue a current interest. A classroom environment and daily programme which offer maximum choice to individual children in terms of access to equipment and space, use of time and opportunities for collaboration with others is most appropriate.

We offer a well-conceived, well organised and resourced learning environment, which provides opportunities for discovery across all areas of learning and is the best means of encouraging personal autonomy and a sense of responsibility. All resources and equipment are presented and stored in such a way as to be easily accessible to young children and may be used in flexible and imaginative ways.

We endeavour to ensure that the learning context we provide offers a rich and stimulating environment, both indoors and outside, which reflects the needs and interests of young children and provides appropriate opportunities for the children to meet new challenges as well as to practise and consolidate developing skills and concepts.

Phonics and Early Reading

We use a systematic approach to phonics and deliver discrete phonics sessions using the Red Rose Letters and Sounds scheme to support learning and development in this area. We choose quality texts for the development of vocabulary, early reading and early writing.

Literacy

We use Greg Bottrill's Drawing Club in Reception to inspire a love of stories and provide a meaningful purpose for drawing and early writing. Through imaginative storytelling, rich vocabulary and adult interaction, children are encouraged to express their ideas, develop confidence and strengthen their fine

motor skills. The approach allows practitioners to respond to children's interests and individual stages of development, supporting progression from drawing and mark-making towards increasingly independent writing. It complements our systematic phonics teaching and supports communication and language, literacy and expressive arts and design.

Maths

We support the learning and development of Number and Numerical patterns using the White Rose scheme of work also supported by the NCETM Numberblocks resources.

Science

We use the ASE Primary Science Assessment PLAN to support the learning and development of the scientific concepts included in the Understanding the World area of learning.

PSED

We use resources from the SCARF programme of study to support the learning and development in the area of Personal, Social and Emotional development.

Physical Development

We follow the Lancashire PE planning for early years and make use of the Lancashire PE Passport resources to monitor and track children's development in this area.

Religious Education

As a church school we deliver discrete Religious Education sessions using the Diocese of Blackburn scheme of work to ensure the children gain a good foundation in Christian values and knowledge and understanding of the Bible. The children also take part in daily collective worship, either as whole school, Key Stage or within the class.

Art

We use the Access Art resource to help plan for meaningful experiences and activities to develop the required knowledge and skills in the relevant aspects of the Expressive Arts & Design area of learning.

History

We use guidance from the Historical Association scheme of work to help plan experiences and activities which allow the children to develop knowledge and understanding within the Past and Present aspect of the Understanding the World area of learning

Equal Opportunities

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum for every child, including children with SEND, disadvantaged children and those ready for additional challenge. We make reasonable adjustments, remove barriers to participation and work with parents and the SENCO to identify and meet needs promptly. Concerns about progress in a prime area are discussed with parents and support agreed; specialist advice is sought when needed.

Safeguarding and welfare

The headteacher and governing body oversee compliance with Section 3 of the framework. The policy operates in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and reflects the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It is

informed by Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Working Together to Safeguard Children, and the Children Act 1989.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is our highest priority and underpins all practice within the EYFS. All staff are fully trained and understand their responsibility to act in the best interests of the child, following school procedures for recording and reporting any concerns without delay.

Staff in EYFS maintain a strong awareness of children's wellbeing and development and are alert to any changes in behaviour, presentation, or progress that may indicate a safeguarding concern. Any concerns are shared promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded in line with school procedures.

We ensure that children are supported within a safe, secure, and well-supervised environment, both indoors and outdoors, with appropriate risk assessments and staffing arrangements in place in line with statutory requirements. In line with updated safer eating guidance, children are closely supervised during snack time and lunchtime to ensure safe and appropriate eating practices. Within the EYFS, all staff are paediatric first aid trained, enabling them to safely monitor children during mealtimes and respond appropriately to any first aid needs.

Safer recruitment procedures ensure that all adults working with children are suitable to do so. Where intimate care is required, this is carried out in line with the school's Intimate Care Policy, ensuring children's dignity, safety, and wellbeing are always maintained.

SUPERVISION

In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, staff working in EYFS will be offered regular supervision to support safeguarding practice, professional reflection, staff wellbeing and positive outcomes for children. Supervision will take place through 1:1 meetings or in a small group format, led by an Educational Psychologist trained in supervision.

IMPACT

Assessment

Accurate assessment is essential to high-quality education and care. In the careful development and implementation of our curriculum we have a clear understanding of what we want our children to know and be able to do.

As part of our best practice we:

- carefully observe what the children can do and what they know.

- use our knowledge of child development and the Early Learning Goals to plan for children's next steps in their learning and development.

- through effective and accurate assessment identify children who are not making progress and provide early help and intervention where appropriate.

We aim to ensure all children progress through a balanced and creative EYFS curriculum. We strive to ensure each child makes a very good level of progress through the Early Learning Goals, from their individual starting points. All children get the best possible start to their school life and develop the knowledge and skills to reach and exceed their potential in KS1. To check that we are achieving this we take the following measures;

- Assessment is ongoing throughout the year and is embedded within daily practice. It is informed by a range of sources, including observations, discussions with children, skilled questioning, adult-led activities and independent learning opportunities. This continuous approach ensures that practitioners have a clear and accurate understanding of children's progress and needs over time. This is used to

help teachers make formative assessments and inform potential next steps for each child, this includes careful consideration of children with SEND or are who are disadvantaged.

- Summative assessments are completed termly to judge each child's progress in the 7 areas of learning. Their progress against the Development Matters age related expectations is tracked. This allows us to assess the impact of our teaching and decide if sufficient measures are undertaken to help specific children. This is reported to members of the SLT during pupil progress meetings.
- Evidence of activities and independent learning are stored in individual Learning Journey Folders.
- The assessment judgements are moderated by the Early Years team and SLT internally and externally by other schools.
- Parents are invited to provide evidence of their child's progress of learning at home through Parent Consultation sheets and Magic Moment slips.

Baseline Assessment & the EYFS Profile

All children complete the statutory requirement of Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first six weeks of starting in the reception class.

In the final term of the children's reception year the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well- rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. The Profile must reflect practitioners' own knowledge and professional judgement of a child to inform discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Parental Partnership/ Induction

We believe that all parents have a very important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We want to ensure a smooth transition from home to school and allow parents to ask any questions they may have about starting school.

We do this through:

- holding sessions in school for parents in the summer term to discuss school life and the curriculum;
- where possible a member of staff visits all children in their pre-school setting prior to their starting school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teachers before starting school;
- holding a Phonics Session for all parents and other supporting adults in the Autumn term to explain how we teach Phonics and Reading in school and how they can help by supporting their child at home.
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class.
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are formal meeting for parents in the Autumn and Spring term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. They receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;

- having flexible admission arrangements to ensure a gradual induction of all children that enable both children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- encouraging continued parental involvement through informal helping in class, attendance at Class and Achievement assemblies and involvement with Fundraising activities through the Overton School Friends Association.

Transition Procedures

Points of transition:

Nursery to Reception

All children are visited at their setting in the summer term prior to them starting school. This provides an opportunity to see what stage they are at in their learning and development by talking to the child, seeing them at play in familiar surroundings and talking with their Key Worker. Children are invited to spend 2 afternoon sessions in the classroom during the summer term, unaccompanied by parents.

Reception to Y1

Children are already familiar with and to the staff in Holly Class through shared Worship time and other activities throughout the year. For the Autumn term at least, Holly Class has a similarly organised morning with focussed tasks and Continuous Provision, to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

Information to be transferred:

Nursery to Reception

Information is collected from Parents prior to or at the Induction Session with reference to personal information, contact details, medical needs, allergies, and permission for photographs. Information is also collected on the children's strengths, activities they like to take part in and their favourite books.

Some parents and settings pass on the Learning journals or Records of Achievement so that we can check interests and achievements before returning them to the family.

Reception to Y1

Year 1 teachers receive each child's EYFS Profile report and take part in a transition discussion about learning, development and support needs. A short commentary on the characteristics of effective teaching and learning may be shared where useful. Relevant care plans and SEND support information transfer securely. The Profile informs transition; Year 1 teaching continues to build on the child's actual knowledge and needs.

Liaison with other agencies

There is a close involvement with the School nurse and Speech and Language Therapists who hold drop in sessions for parents and visits the school for assessments and regular sessions as appropriate.

Date amended: October 2026

Next review: October 2027, or sooner if statutory requirements change.