



Milecastle Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Reviewed January 2026



MILECASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

RATIONALE

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Milecastle Primary School we aim to provide a learning environment of the highest quality which reflects their needs and achievements. Children are presented with a range of learning experiences which enable them to flourish into independent, successful and resilient learners.

AIMS

- To provide a secure environment where all children have the right to feel safe and happy.
- To provide a stimulating and engaging environment where the learning is enjoyable and purposeful.
- To provide a well-balanced curriculum for each child to develop socially, physically and intellectually.
- To observe the children's interests and to use these observations to inform our future planning.
- To encourage all children to become independent learners.
- To promote a child's 'well-being'; ensuring they always feel at ease, are spontaneous and free of emotional tensions.
- To provide equal opportunities for all children to develop to their full potential and to encourage children to be respectful and appreciative of others.
- To encourage the children to develop positive relationships with their peers and adults.
- To establish and maintain a partnership with parents to support the education of their children.
- To ensure smooth transitions from home to Reception and from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Key Stage 1.

SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE

At Milecastle Primary School, we are committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This policy is written with regard to the statutory *Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework* (as updated September 2025), which places a legal requirement on all early years providers to meet safeguarding and welfare requirements to ensure children are kept safe and healthy. [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

We also adhere to national safeguarding legislation and guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), and work in partnership with local safeguarding partners to safeguard children.

We ensure that our pupils are protected from abuse and neglect and that action is taken to prevent harm. Children learn in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment and are cared for by staff who are knowledgeable, trained, and vigilant in safeguarding practice.

We follow safer recruitment practice to ensure all adults working with children:

- Are DBS checked and qualified for their role.
- Have verified references and employment history before appointment.
- Complete safeguarding induction and ongoing training.
- Have regular reviews and updates of training including safeguarding and child protection.

The Reception teacher has the role of Deputy Safeguarding Lead and is suitably trained to lead safeguarding practice and to ensure appropriate action is taken should concerns arise.

All staff must:

- Be alert to signs of harm, abuse or neglect and know how to record and report concerns immediately.
- Understand and follow the school's child protection procedures, including escalation and whistleblowing pathways.
- Maintain professional boundaries and follow the staff code of conduct.
- Follow the statutory requirement to follow up unexplained or prolonged absences, particularly for nursery-age children, in line with the EYFS framework.

We maintain adequate adult-to-child ratios in line with EYFS statutory requirements to ensure safety and quality of care at all times. All adults working with children are appropriately qualified, or suitably supervised where applicable.

We protect children's health and wellbeing by ensuring:

- Effective infection control and hygiene practices, including for toilet and intimate care.
- Safe management of medicines and first aid (including a trained paediatric first aider present at all times).
- A safe learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, with risk assessments in place.
- Procedures are in place for safer eating, allergy awareness and food hygiene. (A paediatric first aider is always present to supervise children whilst they are eating.)

CURRICULUM

Our Reception class follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. This document is available to download at [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61222/early_years_foundation_stage_eofst_statutory_framework.pdf)

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

These are delivered through 7 areas of learning and development.

The 3 prime areas are particularly important as they build a foundation for children to thrive. These areas are core to the children's learning and underpin all learning in Reception class.

The prime areas are:

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

Four specific areas of learning help to further strengthen and develop the prime areas. These areas ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

The specific areas of learning are:

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

At Milecastle Primary School we ensure that the statutory framework is delivered through a well-planned, broad and ambitious curriculum where children enjoy learning in exciting and purposeful ways. We focus on teaching the essential knowledge and skills required to ensure that our pupils are prepared for Key Stage 1. We plan carefully and thoughtfully to ensure that the needs of all children are met, including those with SEND and EAL and are reflective in our practice, making adjustments when needed. Planning and delivery of the curriculum ensures that careful thought is given to the Characteristics of Effective Learning which underpin all teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage:

These are:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creative and Thinking Critically

Our curriculum is carefully planned using Development Matters as a basis to ensure progression across all seven areas. Planning gives careful consideration to the endpoints we have identified for our pupils by the end of the Early Years, ensuring that they have a solid basis of knowledge and skills and are prepared for their continuing journey into Key Stage 1. Planning clearly identifies a good balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for child-initiated learning.

We pride ourselves on knowing each child as an individual and take into account each pupil's individual needs and interests. As a result, our curriculum is flexible in order to ensure that we meet the needs of every individual pupil and each new cohort.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our curriculum is implemented through a balance of whole class inputs, teacher-led activities and high quality child-initiated play.

Whole class inputs and teacher-led activities include:

- Daily phonics sessions using the Sounds-Write programme
- Three sessions per week of Drawing Club
- NCETM maths sessions supplemented with Shape, Space and Measures sessions from White Rose Maths
- Whole class topic inputs based on our half-termly enquiry questions which then lead into further learning through purposeful play
- Regular 1:1 reading sessions
- Daily rhyme and story times where we sing a range of nursery rhymes and read a combination of adult-selected books and stories chosen by the children

Our planning and teaching directly impacts our Continuous Provision and our Enhanced Continuous Provision.

ASSESSMENT

The Foundation Stage Profile states all children have a right to have their strengths acknowledged and celebrated and their needs and next steps in their learning clearly identified.

At Milecastle Primary School we complete a baseline assessment in the first half term (in addition to the statutory RBA), which provides vital information used to plan a curriculum suited to each child's individual needs. The children are tracked on a termly basis from that starting point to ensure every child is making at least good progress. It also identifies where some children may need additional support as well as ensuring that the needs of children with SEND or EAL and those in receipt of Pupil Premium are well met.

Our ongoing, formative assessment provides us with a detailed knowledge of every child so that all children have the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding at the appropriate level. Assessment of the children is made from independent tasks, from structured sessions, such as literacy and maths and from observations made in their child-initiated activities. All staff have a clear understanding of each child's progress and current level of attainment. Staff use their knowledge of individual children and their expertise to support pupils as necessary. Assessment is used effectively to plan and shape future teaching and learning experiences. Assessment also forms the basis of our transition meetings between the reception and year 1 teachers. Detailed information about each pupil's progress and development is shared in order to ensure a successful transition to Key Stage 1.

Parents and carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and we work closely with the families of our pupils, sharing information about any individual learning needs. Such needs are identified as quickly as possible with referrals to relevant professionals being made where necessary.

Alongside our school-based assessments, we also carry out statutory assessments during the reception year. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is carried out during the first 6 weeks of school. In the final term of the reception year, the EYFS profile is completed for each child by the reception teacher and children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). This information is shared with parents and carers as well as the year 1 teacher to provide information on whether children are meeting the expected levels of development.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

We take great pride in our Early Years environment and are determined to provide a warm, safe, calm area where our pupils can thrive. Both our indoor and outdoor environments have been carefully planned to ensure they provide opportunities for good quality, purposeful play. Each area of our continuous provision contains high quality, open-ended resources which have been carefully selected. Each child's individual needs and stage of development are considered so that our provision areas contain 'levelled' resources to help all of our children develop their skills and knowledge at the appropriate level. Resources are built on throughout the year in order to allow pupils to develop and extend their skills. All staff prioritise quality interactions with our pupils and know each child's stage of development. This ensures that we are skilled in taking learning into our children's play and in meeting each individual child's needs.

INCLUSION

All children are valued and we strive to ensure that every pupil receives the same curriculum. Activities are differentiated and adapted to take account of every child's needs and adult support is carefully planned. Every effort is made to present our curriculum in such a way that it is equally interesting and accessible to all children no matter what their gender, ethnicity or impairment. (see Inclusion Policy)

TRANSITION

Starting school can be an exciting but overwhelming and daunting experience for both parents and children. At Milecastle Primary School we have established a system to ensure parents and children feel confident and secure when facing these challenges.

Open afternoons and evenings are held to allow parents to visit school and meet staff, as well as an opportunity to see the school when it is in session. A further opportunity to visit the school is given in the term before the child starts school. This is an informal evening, which provides parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge about the curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child with the transition to Milecastle Primary School.

Prior to the beginning of the new academic year, all children are visited at their settings to allow the reception teacher to gather as much information as possible about each child. This also provides a recognisable face for the children when they come to visit. There are two opportunities for the children to visit our school with their parents. This gives the children the confidence to explore their new setting with the security of their parents nearby.

At the beginning of the school year, new children are given staggered entry times to ensure that they have the time to feel welcomed and to support them in exploring their new environment.

Transition into Key Stage 1 is viewed as a process rather than an event. Initially, the Year One teacher visits the children in their reception classroom, reading stories and spending time with them in provision. This ensures that children meet their new teacher in their own environment where they feel comfortable and safe. Once the children are ready, they then spend time in the Year 1 classroom and are supported in getting to know this new environment. This process ensures that our pupils leave reception feeling confident about their entry into Year 1.

At the end of each school year, teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children before they begin the new school year.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore we work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting.

At the beginning of the year, parents/carers are invited to a 'welcome meeting' held in the reception classroom. Here, they are given information by the class teacher regarding how the curriculum is taught at Milecastle and about how they can support their child at home.

Soon after their children have started school, parents are invited in to watch a phonics lesson being taught. This is followed by a chance to chat with the class teacher and to ask any questions regarding the teaching of phonics, reading and spelling.

We also hold regular 'Family Afternoons' where each child is invited to bring in a family member to spend the afternoon in school with them taking part in a range of activities.

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with their teacher in person or via Seesaw.