



Woolmore
Primary School

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

September 2026

Introduction and Overview

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services, they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance."

This policy is based on the Department for Education's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, effective from September 2025. Woolmore Primary School is committed to ensuring that all children receive high-quality early education and care in accordance with the statutory requirements for learning, development, safeguarding and welfare.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Woolmore, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

This policy outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of teaching and learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is in line with the EYFS statutory framework. This policy should read in conjunction with other whole school policies, available on our school website.

Early Years Foundation Stage Principles

The Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four guiding principles:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning and Development

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

1. A Unique Child

At Woolmore Primary School we recognise that every child is unique and that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Our curriculum supports all learners by fostering a love of learning and offering experiences that help children to understand themselves and the world around them. We recognise that every child is a unique learner who can develop confidence, resilience, persistence, curiosity and determination.

Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others. We consistently use praise and encouragement to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We encourage a growth mindset in all pupils, providing a safe learning culture where children know that making mistakes is useful in helping us learn. All children's ideas and contributions are valued equally.

2. Positive Relationships and Parent Partnership

At Woolmore Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most important educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We value our parents and carers, and aim to develop a strong home school partnership through:

- Outlining the school's expectations to parents/guardians during the new parents' workshops, school visits, home visits, written information (welcome booklets and/application forms).
- Talking to parents/carers about their child before their child starts in our school, including home visits in the nursery.

- Offering both parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend an agreed time in the Early Years before starting school.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries, appointments made at a parent/carer request.
- Sharing the children's 'Learning Journey' and other work with parents at key intervals and valuing the ongoing contributions to this from parents.
- Offering parent/teacher consultation evenings at key stages throughout the year.
- Holding further curriculum workshops to guide parents in supporting their child's learning at home.
- Discussing children's individual targets with parents/carers at several points through the year
- Sending a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in the Foundation stage.
- Developing a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers.
- An EYFS profile assessment is completed for each child during the academic year they reach the age of 5. This is shared with parents in the final Reception report.

3. Enabling Environments

We know that children are constantly learning and provide them with opportunities to do so through enabling environments and trips for enrichment. We foster positive relationships with children and create learning environments where children feel safe to take risks; learning how to be safe, resilient and independent.

4. Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development; three prime and four specific areas.

Prime	Specific
Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)	Literacy (L)
Communication and Language (CL)	Mathematics (M)
Physical Development (PD)	Understanding of the World (UtW)
	Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Each of the 7 areas are broken up into strands. There are 17 strands in total.

We believe that once children are secure in the prime areas of learning they are better prepared to access the specific areas. However, all areas are equally important to ensure the development of the 'whole child'. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics of effective learning are:

1. Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
2. Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
3. Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Learning Through Play

“Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.”

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (DfE), effective September 2025

At Woolmore, we support children's learning through planned play activities and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved and modelling by example.

At Woolmore Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences.

Inclusion, Safety and Welfare

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (DfE), effective September 2025.

At Woolmore Primary School we comply with legal welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Woolmore Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families

are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more-able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds including our most disadvantaged, children of different ethnic groups and those from bilingual backgrounds.

At Woolmore Primary School we are committed to ensuring that all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), can access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum and achieve their full potential.

Staff work closely with parents, carers, outside agencies and the school's SENDCo to identify children's needs at the earliest possible stage and provide targeted support where required. Early identification enables appropriate intervention and helps to ensure that children make good progress from their individual starting points.

Practitioners continually observe and assess children's learning and development. Where concerns arise regarding a child's progress, staff will discuss these with parents/carers and work collaboratively to plan appropriate support and next steps.

Support for children with SEND may include:

- Adaptations to teaching, learning activities and the environment.
- Additional adult support where appropriate.
- Targeted interventions and small-group work.
- Individual support plans and personalised learning targets.
- Use of specialist resources and strategies.
- Advice and support from external professionals, including Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Health Professionals and specialist teaching services.

The graduated approach of Assess, Plan, Do, Review is used to monitor the effectiveness of additional support and ensure provision is responsive to children's individual needs.

Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school works closely with families and external agencies to implement agreed provision and review progress regularly.

We recognise the importance of inclusive practice and ensure that children with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life, enabling them to participate, achieve and develop positive relationships alongside their peers.

Further information can be found in the school's SEND Policy and SEND Information Report.

It is of paramount importance that all children in the school are safe. We educate children about boundaries and how to manage their own behaviour in order to support them in school and as global citizens. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

Safeguarding

It is of paramount importance that all children in the school are safe. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and expect all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment.

Safeguarding procedures are implemented in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- The Prevent Duty Guidance
- The EYFS Statutory Framework
- Local Safeguarding Partnership procedures

Children are taught how to stay safe, make informed choices, develop healthy relationships and identify trusted adults who can help them. Staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role and understand their responsibilities for reporting concerns about children or adults.

Please refer to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for full details of procedures and responsibilities.

Screen use and digital technology

We at Woolmore recognises that young children learn best through active play, exploration, high-quality interactions and first-hand experiences. The use of screens and digital technology within the EYFS is therefore limited, purposeful, developmentally appropriate and clearly linked to intended learning.

Practitioners have regard to current DfE guidance on screen use in early years settings. Screens do not replace high-quality adult-child interactions, physical activity, outdoor learning, play or other important learning experiences. Where screens are used with children, practitioners ensure that content is safe and age appropriate and that adults actively engage with children during their use. Appropriate adjustments are made where screen-based assistive technology supports children with SEND.

Attendance and Absence

Regular attendance is essential in supporting children's learning, development and wellbeing. Parents and carers are expected to notify the school on the first day of any absence.

Unexplained or prolonged absences are followed up promptly in line with the school's Attendance Policy and safeguarding procedures. Patterns of absence are monitored, and concerns are referred to appropriate agencies where necessary to ensure children's welfare and safety.

Teaching and Learning

We include direct, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Indoor and Outdoor Provision

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The adults move to whichever area their focus for the session/day is. The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas

The free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active.

Literacy

We follow schemes for our specific areas.

We teach phonics through a systematic synthetic phonics programme that is aligned with current Department for Education expectations. Daily phonics teaching supports the development of early reading, writing, vocabulary and language skills. Reading books are closely matched to children's phonics knowledge to support fluency and confidence. There is a clear expectation of phonics progression term by term for each year group. Children have access to a wide range of books including phonically decodable books, which have been closely matched to sounds taught and individual level of progress. We support children's vocabulary acquisition and writing development further by adopting Pie Corbett's 'Talk for Writing' strategies in Topic Literacy sessions.

Maths

We use the PA Maths Programme across the EYFS and further up the school. We teach a curriculum based around the two mathematics strands; number and shape, space and measure. Learning opportunities are provided on a continuum linked to developmental stage, rather than by age. Children develop their mathematical understanding through concrete, pictorial and abstract experiences. Language is at the heart of developing children's conceptual understanding as well as their procedural fluency.

Planning

Effective planning is the key to making children's learning exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do at the appropriate level of challenge. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice. This is always informed by observations that have been made

of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs.

- All practitioners who work across the EYFS are involved in making observations of children's learning.
- Planning is centred around children's interests, developmental needs and next steps in learning, in line with the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework and the school's EYFS curriculum.
- An annual overview is used to support medium term planning so that a breadth of skills is taught alongside a rich and stimulating curriculum.
- Each year group considers a weekly focus skill for each of the 7 areas. These are shared with parents.
- Planning used by the EYFS team is a guide for weekly planning; these may be altered in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of children.

Assessment

In order to support our view of what each child is able to achieve and their next steps, staff use a range of assessment strategies to gather information about how each child is progressing. Staff use this to inform planning and provide learning opportunities, tailored to whole class and individual need. The strategies we use to build a picture of each child's development throughout the year include:

- Observations – formal and informal
- Learning journeys (Nursery)
- Mark making books (Nursery)
- Literacy books (Reception)
- Maths books (Reception)
- Floor Book (Reception)
- Specific areas progress trackers
- Communication and language assessments, including interventions (WellComm)

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

Children entering Reception complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first six weeks of starting school. The assessment provides a starting point from which pupils' progress to the end of Key Stage 2 can be measured. The assessment does not provide a measure of attainment for individual children and is used in accordance with Department for Education requirements.

We use this information to track children's progress over time at key intervals; baseline, autumn, spring and summer. Teams meet termly for a pupil progress meeting. These are opportunities to review achievement and progress and analyse key groups. Findings are used to inform subsequent teaching and learning. Assessment information is also used to identify children who may require additional support, including those with SEND, disadvantaged children and children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Early intervention is provided where appropriate to ensure all children make strong progress from their starting points.

At the end of the foundation stage, children's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals. Within the final term of Reception, parents are provided with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher in preparation for Year 1.

Staffing and Organisation

Within our schools our staffing ratios are in line with the EYFS statutory guidelines. We expect the teacher (or equivalent) to be working with children for the vast majority of the time. Where they need to be absent for short periods of time, we will need to ensure that quality and safety is maintained.

For children aged three and over: There must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children; At least one member of staff must be a school teacher At least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification

For children in Reception classes: The School Admissions (Infant Class Size) Regulations 2012 limit the size of infant classes to 30 pupils per school teacher while an ordinary teaching session is conducted.

Relationships and routines: At the Woolmore, we believe that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. In accordance with the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers (2025), each child is assigned a key person. This is an important role. Children thrive from a base of loving and secure relationships. This is normally provided by a child's parent/s, but it can also be provided by a key person. A key person is a named member of staff with responsibilities for a small group of children. The key person helps all children in the group to feel safe and cared for. The key person responds sensitively to children's feelings and behaviours and meets their emotional needs by giving reassurance, such as when they are new to the setting and supporting the child's well-being.

The key person supports physical needs too, helping with issues such as toileting and dressing. This person is a familiar figure who is accessible and available as a point of contact for parents and one who builds relationships with the child and parents or carers.

Records of development and care are created and shared by the key person, parents and the child. The key person 'tunes into' children's play and their conversations to really get to know the children in the group well. Children feel settled and happy, and are more confident to explore and, as a result, become more capable learners.

First Aider: At least one person who holds a current paediatric first aid certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and (as designated by the EYFS framework) will accompany children on outings.

School Trips: All trips will have at least the above ratios as a minimum but where possible will have a greater number of adults deemed necessary to support safety and management on school trips. This might include parents and carers who will be under the supervision of the class teacher and must include a staff member with a current paediatric first aid certificate.

Safety: Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Safer Eating: At the Woolmore, we recognise the importance of creating a safe and positive eating environment for all children. Practitioners follow the safer eating requirements set out in the EYFS statutory framework and ensure that:

- Children are appropriately supervised while eating and are always within sight and hearing of a member of staff.
- Children are encouraged to sit safely while eating, and practitioners remain alert to signs of choking, including silent choking.
- While children are eating, at least one member of staff who holds a valid full-course paediatric first aid certificate is in the room.
- At each mealtime and snack time, it is clear who is responsible for checking that food and drink meets each child's individual dietary and health requirements. Food is prepared, stored and served safely and is appropriate for children's age and development, including reducing choking risk.
- food is prepared, stored and served safely and is appropriate for children's age and development, including being prepared in ways that reduce the risk of choking
- Work with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop and keep up to date allergy action plans.
- Work with parents and carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop and keep up to date allergy action plans for known allergies and intolerances, ensuring that relevant information is shared with staff and that staff understand how to recognise and respond to allergic reactions and anaphylaxis
- staff are aware that allergies can develop at any time and understand the difference between an allergy and an intolerance.

Safer Sleep: At The Woolmore, we recognise the importance of ensuring that any child who sleeps while in our care does so safely. Practitioners follow the relevant safer sleep requirements set out in the EYFS statutory framework and associated guidance. Children who sleep are provided with a safe and appropriate sleep environment, remain within sight and hearing of staff, and are checked regularly. Sleep arrangements take account

of children's age, individual needs and relevant information provided by parents and carers.

Whistleblowing

Woolmore Primary School encourages a culture of openness and accountability. All staff are expected to raise concerns where they believe a child may be at risk or where unsafe, inappropriate or unlawful practice is identified.

Concerns should be reported in accordance with the school's Whistleblowing Policy. Staff are protected when raising concerns in good faith and will be supported through the reporting process.

Safer Recruitment

The school follows safer recruitment procedures to ensure that all adults working with children are suitable to do so. Appropriate safeguarding checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, references and identity verification, are carried out in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's Safer Recruitment Policy.

Admissions

The EYFS includes all children from birth to five years of age. At Woolmore, we have two Nursery and three Reception classes in the EYFS. Children in both Nursery and Reception are admitted to the Early Years in one annual intake in September.

Information about children's dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances is obtained before children are admitted and shared with all relevant staff. Staff are aware that allergies can develop at any time and understand the difference between an allergy and an intolerance.

Nursery

We currently offer free full-time places to all Nursery children. There are two available classes of 26. In each class, staffing ratios reflect statutory guidelines as set out by the Department for Education (DfE) Statutory Framework for the EYFS.

To apply for a nursery place, parents need to go to the [eadmissions](#) website. The borough, not Woolmore, allocate Nursery places. Places are allocated based on criteria set out by the borough.

All parents are expected to check their eligibility for a funded place (30 hours free) on receipt of an offer. Eligibility codes, or confirmation that a child is not eligible for a funded place, will be requested as part of our admissions process.

Reception

We have three Reception classes. Each Reception class offers 30 places in line DfE guidance on Infant class sizes, totalling 90 across the year group.

Families make a separate application for Reception through the [eadmissions](#) website in accordance with Tower Hamlets guidance and the school's Admission Policy.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

Children attend introductory sessions before starting to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Children will require different support at different stages during the settling process. Parents may be required to spend several sessions in our settings. Each class and age group will share these expectations with parents, where possible, before a place is accepted. Staggered starts and reduced sessions also contribute to our practise of supporting children to make secure starts.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Additional transition arrangements are put in place for children with SEND where required. These may include additional visits, social stories, meetings with parents and professionals, sharing of support plans and bespoke transition programmes to ensure children feel safe and secure when moving between settings or classes.

Transitions to Nursery

Nursery staff conduct home visits for all the children during the summer term before school starts. Over the first few days at the school, we encourage parents and carers to stay for as long as they wish in the classroom to ensure the transition to the school goes smoothly. We have a staggered entry into Nursery which is responsive to how a child has settled.

Transitions to Reception

Children starting in the Reception class will visit their new class during Transition Week in the summer term. Special book portfolios and data from the nursery and other settings are shared with staff.

Transitions to Year 1

Passing on data from the EYFS Profile, along with end of year reports to the Year 1 teacher during Handover

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher, EYFS Lead and Governing Body are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently and remains compliant with current statutory requirements.

The effectiveness of EYFS provision is monitored through:

- Lesson visits and learning walks
- Monitoring of children's progress and attainment
- Review of assessment information

- Staff meetings and professional development
- Pupil voice and parental feedback
- Safeguarding and welfare audits

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance or school procedures

Policy date: September 2026

Approved by: Governing Body

Review date: September 2027

Responsible officer: Headteacher / EYFS Lead