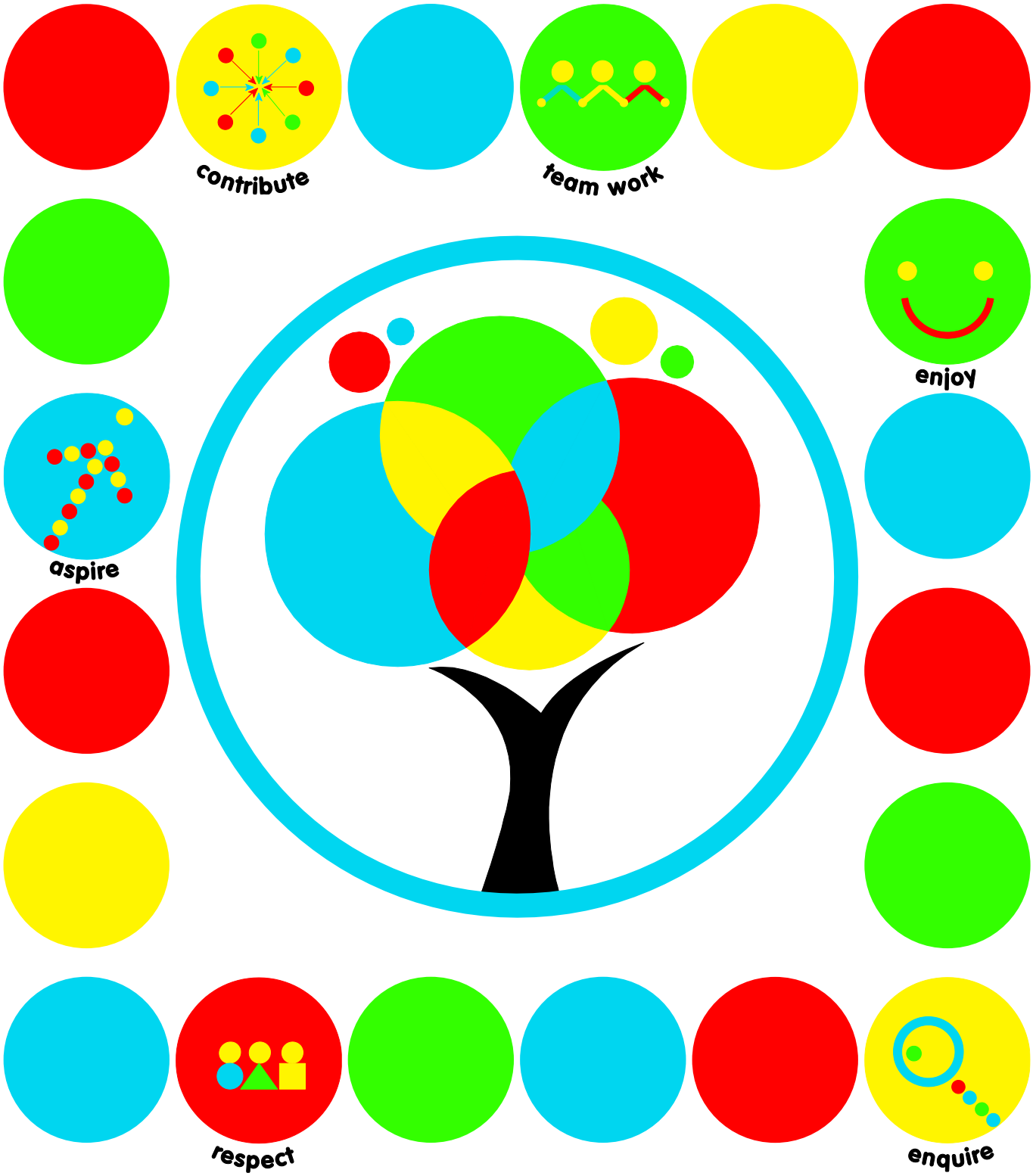


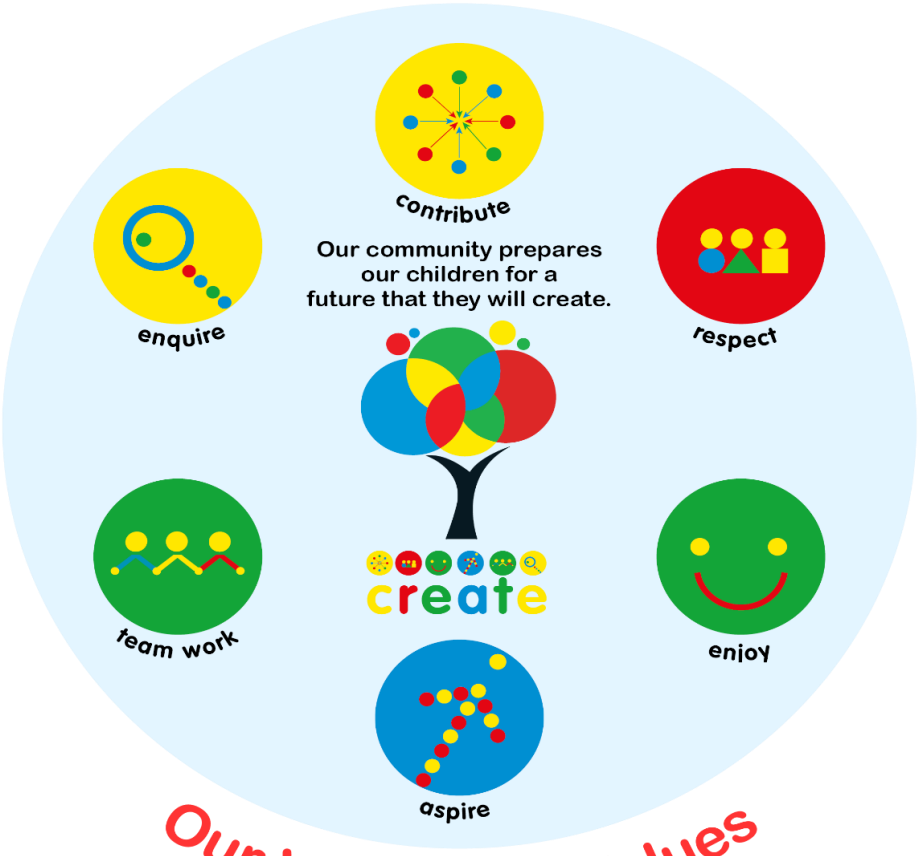
EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Head teacher signature:

Chair of Governors signature:

Review date: September 2026

Thomas Buxton Primary School
Learning Together



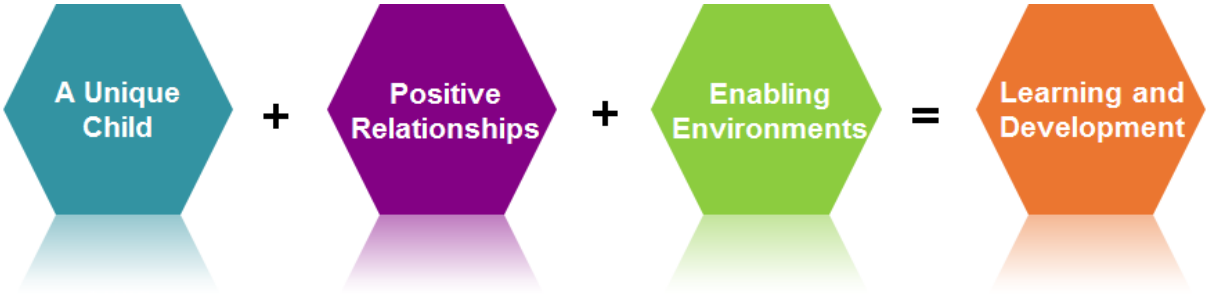
Our Vision and Values

Version Control		
Date	Version	Comments
November 2025	2	p.6 – Positive Relationships, Welfare
November 2025	2	p.7 – Parents as Partners

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO PLAY

unicef



Thomas Buxton Primary School
Learning Together

Our School Vision

Thomas Buxton Primary School will work with everyone to create a happy, safe and stimulating setting where children are motivated to learn together. By maintaining high expectations of ourselves and each other, our children will be equipped to encounter opportunities and challenges with resilience and determination. We encourage a curiosity about the world and strive to ensure that our children will contribute positively, now and in the future.

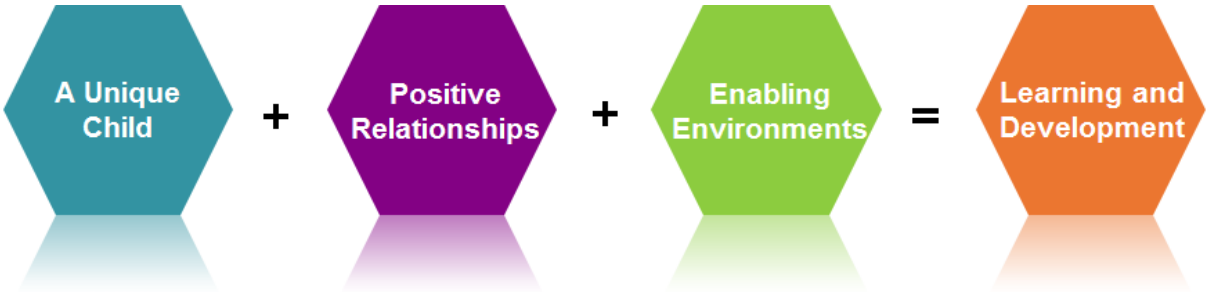
Early Years Foundation Stage

Article 31 of the UNCRC 'every child has the right to play' is at the heart of our ethos: we understand that children learn best through play. Our dynamic planning is both based around children's interests and objective-led to ensure provision meets the needs of all of our unique children.
2018-2019 Vision Statement

A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to reach their full potential. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, 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 that the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.

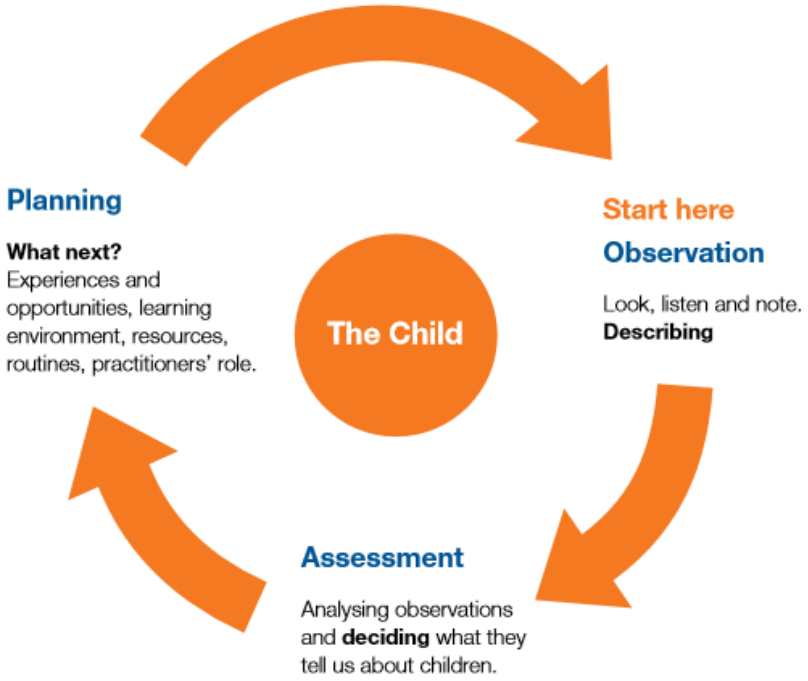
The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, children may join us in nursery from the age of three on a part-time or full-time basis. Children join our Reception classes in the academic year they turn five and attend full-time.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:



A Unique Child

Every child's achievements, progress and interests are carefully monitored throughout the year via observations, adult led activities and through play. Our planning system is built around observing children, assessing what this tells us about the child and then planning activities based around their needs and interests.



At Thomas Buxton Primary School, we use the guidelines 'Development Matters' from the Department for Education and Birth to Five matters developed by the Early Years Coalition. These guidelines indicate the skills and knowledge children typically acquire at different ages. We also use CUSP Early Foundations, with which we explore the foundational knowledge for each area of learning, the opportunities to build on this knowledge and structured story time to build knowledge and language. Through all of this we track the progress of each child. Observations of the children as well as photos of their play and work they have created are kept in children's individual 'Learning Journal' books and through their online learning journal, Tapestry. We discuss children's progress with their families and we plan interventions to support children when necessary. In the final term of the EYFS, we provide a summary to parents and carers which indicates whether children are emerging or working at 'Early Learning Goals.'

Our setting is inclusive: we strive to meet the diverse needs of all of our children, we value what each child brings to our setting and fundamentally believe that all children should be given equal opportunities to reach their potential. We have a range of strategies to ensure children are included, including through open-ended play and through extra adult-support where necessary.

Positive Relationships

At Thomas Buxton Primary School, we recognise that forming positive relationships enables children to feel safe and happy coming to school. Positive wellbeing is essential to children's ability to learn and is therefore of the highest importance. The highly qualified teaching staff, nursery nurses and teaching assistants work with the children on a daily basis, caring for their well-being and monitoring their progress across the curriculum. We carefully monitor children's well-being and involvement and discuss this with parents and carers where necessary, planning interventions where they are needed.

We understand that children are learning how to form relationships and manage their behaviour and we aim to support children with this. We have a fair and consistent system for rewarding positive behaviour and for managing situations in which children may need to learn about making different choices. We aim to communicate these systems clearly so that the children always feel safe in our setting whilst learning how to make friends and respect everyone.

As a UNICEF Rights Respecting School it is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. 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. We have a thorough system for risk-assessing our environment including daily safety-checks.

Welfare

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

At Thomas Buxton Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (updated 2025). We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Whilst children are eating there will always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- Carry out Reception Baseline Assessment within the first six weeks of a child joining the setting, in Reception.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements in our daily practice.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.
We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
- Inviting all parents to a welcome event during the term their child starts school.
- Inviting all parents and children to stay and play in the spring and summer term before their child starts school to discuss their child and school procedures.
- Inviting all parents to join their Reception child for a weekly assembly.
- Providing workshop sessions for parents to explain further school procedures and curriculum content and to give them ideas about fun ways to support and extend their children's learning at home.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress access to the children's 'Learning Journey' both online and in their books.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's class teacher if there are any concerns.
- There is a formal meeting twice a year where the parents can discuss the child's progress in private with their child's class teacher.
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress in the Spring term.

Enabling Environments

At Thomas Buxton Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. Research shows that a stimulating environment with resources to promote open-ended play greatly support children's development in the Early Years with some naming it 'the third teacher.' Our classrooms are very carefully designed and set up to support children to learn through play, we enhance our environment based around our observations of the children to meet their needs and interests. There are areas where the children can

be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to locate and use equipment and resources independently. It is important for young children to spend lots of time outside, we have a rich outdoor environment to support our children's learning, they have access to this throughout the day during free-flow time (at least 3.5 hours per day), whatever the weather. To enhance this provision, all Reception children have the opportunity to have a sequence of sessions in our 'Forest School' throughout the year.

Learning and Development

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:
Prime Areas of Learning

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

Specific Areas of Learning

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities and most importantly, through play. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Play

Learning through play is at the heart of our pedagogical ethos. Research shows that children learn best through play and therefore our school day revolves around opportunities for extended, open-ended, well-supported play. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

School Ethos

At Thomas Buxton Primary School, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- The partnership between teaching staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that EYFS staff have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching.
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- The carefully planned curriculum, based on interests and needs, that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the EYFS.
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management.
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents.
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

As well as the prime and specific areas of the curriculum, children are learning how to become effective learners in the Foundation stage. Our play-based curriculum and adult interactions support children to develop in these areas.

Playing and Exploring

Children should be given opportunities to explore things which spark their curiosity and encourage them to ask questions and want to learn more. Gradually children will gain confidence and be willing to 'give it a go.'

Continuous provision allows children to confidently play with items that are familiar and feel safe and they should also be introduced to stimuli which inspire awe and engage them in wanting to find out more. Children should be encouraged to take sensible risks and try new things as they gain confidence.

Active Learning

Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

Children should be given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS team to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Governing Body are regularly informed of developments and progress within the EYFS.

EYFS Phase Leader, Ms Fiona Measures, working alongside the senior leadership team, will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.