



**Northiam Church of England Primary School
Honeybees Pre-School**

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

September 2026

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Aims

At Northiam Church of England Primary School and Honeybees Nursery, our vision is to cultivate a rich, inclusive, and aspirational early years curriculum that empowers every child to thrive. We are committed to designing learning experiences that spark curiosity, foster critical thinking, and encourage children to become active, reflective participants in their own development. Our curriculum is intentionally ambitious, ensuring that all pupils—regardless of background or starting point—are challenged, supported, and inspired.

From the moment children join us in Nursery through to the end of Reception, we build upon their unique experiences, nurturing their growth across all areas of learning. Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision lays the groundwork for confident, capable learners who are fully prepared for the transition into Key Stage 1 and beyond.

We are passionate about creating a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment that promotes independence, resilience, and collaboration. Our ethos is rooted in our core Christian values: Trust, Compassion, Fellowship, Humility, Courage, and Thankfulness. These values are woven into the fabric of daily life, shaping both character and community. At Northiam, we place a strong emphasis on language development, rich vocabulary, and a deep love of reading. Through meaningful experiences and high-quality texts, we aim to ignite imagination and equip children with the tools they need to succeed throughout their educational journey.

Context

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Northiam Church of England Primary School includes Honeybees Nursery and Willow Reception Class, offering a nurturing and high-quality start to every child's educational journey.

Honeybees Nursery is led by a qualified Class Teacher and supported by experienced Early Years Teaching Assistants. The nursery provides a spacious, open-plan classroom and a secure outdoor learning environment designed to encourage exploration, creativity, and physical development.

From September 2025, the UK government has expanded its early years funding entitlements. Families may now be eligible for:

30 hours of free childcare per week for children aged 9 months to 4 years, if they meet the working parent criteria.

15 hours of universal funding for all 3- and 4-year-olds.

Additional support funding for eligible 2-year-olds, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

At Honeybees Preschool, we offer two daily sessions that align with the full funding entitlement:

Morning session: 8:30am – 12:30pm

Afternoon session: 12:30pm – 3:30pm

Children attending both sessions can access the full 30 hours of funded childcare across the week.

To support working families further, we now offer a Breakfast Club from 8:00am to 8:30am, which can be booked via Arbour. This provides a calm and welcoming start to the day and supports parents with early drop-offs.

Willow Reception Class is staffed by a dedicated Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant, with additional support allocated based on cohort needs. All EYFS staff are trained in Paediatric First Aid, ensuring a safe and responsive environment. Reception hours run from 8:40am to 3:30pm.

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Entitlement

At Northiam C of E Primary School children are able to join the Nursery the term after their 2nd birthday. All children begin Reception in the September of the academic year in which they turn five unless their parents wish to defer entry to January or until they are of statutory school age.

The Early Years Foundation Framework

At our school, we believe that every child deserves the strongest possible start to their educational journey. In Nursery and Reception, children follow our thoughtfully crafted EYFS curriculum, designed to ignite curiosity, nurture resilience, and lay the essential foundations for lifelong learning and success.

Rooted in the principles of high ambition and inclusivity, our curriculum offers a broad and balanced range of knowledge and skills. It is language-rich and carefully sequenced to ensure that all children—regardless of their starting points—make excellent progress. Each topic is brought to life through inspiring stories, nursery rhymes, and high-quality texts, which serve as powerful vehicles for deepening understanding and enriching vocabulary.

We are unwavering in our determination to help every child succeed. Through warm, purposeful interactions and a culture of high expectations, children are supported to develop their confidence, independence, and love of learning. Our curriculum is underpinned by the seven areas of learning and development, through which children explore, practise, and embed new knowledge and skills:

Prime Areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

These seven areas are used to plan children's learning and activities and are tailored to suit each child's individual needs in conjunction with the Characteristics of Effective Learning, which 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 achievements

creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly.

Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

Implementation

Our Early Years provision is rooted in the belief that strong foundations are built through a carefully sequenced, ambitious curriculum that nurtures curiosity, independence, and a lifelong love of learning from the very start. Through a balance of direct teaching, structured play, and child-led exploration, we ensure that children develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to thrive.

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Daily routines are carefully planned to promote communication and language, physical development, and personal, social and emotional growth—forming the bedrock of future academic success. Our continuous provision is enhanced by high-quality adult interactions that extend thinking, model language, and scaffold learning in real time.

Our indoor and outdoor environments are intentionally designed to support progression across all areas of learning. Outdoor learning is a core part of our curriculum, with rich opportunities for risk-taking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Our extensive school grounds are used regularly to support our 'Friday Focus' enrichment programme, which deepens children's understanding of the world and nurtures curiosity.

We further enrich the curriculum through purposeful engagement with the local community, including educational visits and visitors who bring learning to life. These experiences build cultural capital and ensure that all children, regardless of background, have access to a broad and meaningful early education.

Planning

Long, medium and short-term planning takes into account:

- Careful assessment that identifies children's next steps in learning
- The emerging interests and needs of the children
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and Key Skills document

Our Early Years practitioners implement a responsive and ambitious curriculum by planning high-quality, purposeful learning experiences that build strong foundations across all areas of development. Teaching is underpinned by a deep understanding of child development and is carefully sequenced to ensure progression in knowledge and skills.

Teachers skilfully scaffold and extend children's learning through first-hand, meaningful experiences that promote independence, decision-making, and problem-solving. Planning is intentionally flexible, enabling staff to respond to children's emerging interests and developmental needs both in the moment and when shaping future learning opportunities.

Our continuous provision is thoughtfully designed and regularly adapted to reflect the unique needs and interests of each cohort. Carefully curated invitations to play are embedded throughout the environment, encouraging children to revisit, rehearse, and apply taught skills with increasing confidence and autonomy across a range of contexts.

Assessment: Informing Practice, Supporting Progress

Assessment plays a vital role in ensuring our curriculum remains responsive to the evolving developmental and academic needs of every child. In the EYFS, we use a balanced approach to assessment that combines ongoing formative observations with periodic summative assessments to build a holistic picture of each child's learning journey. Teachers and Teaching Assistants carry out continuous, informal assessments throughout the day, week, and year. These formative assessments include high-quality observations, feedback from parents and other stakeholders, outcomes from adult-led activities, and daily interactions with children. This real-time information enables staff to adapt provision and teaching strategies to meet individual needs and interests effectively.

Formal summative assessments are conducted three times a year, beginning with a baseline assessment in October. These are analysed through a Gaps and Strengths Analysis to identify patterns, inform planning, and ensure that all children are supported and challenged appropriately. This data, combined with practitioners' deep knowledge of each child, informs end-of-year judgements against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

Assessment information is gathered from a range of sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of each child's development, including:

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first six weeks of starting school

Contextual cohort information forms on entry and exit in Nursery and Reception

Reception-specific on-entry assessments

Focused group assessments, such as phonics tracking

Floor Books

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Children, parents, and other adults—including lunchtime supervisors—are encouraged to contribute to each child's Learning Journey. This collaborative approach ensures that the full breadth of a child's experiences, achievements, and progress is captured and celebrated.

In Nursery, Learning Journeys also support smooth and informed transitions, with detailed handover meetings between staff. In Reception, these records are built upon using consistent systems, ensuring continuity and progression in each child's learning.

Reporting the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

At the end of the Reception Year, in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and current Department for Education (DfE) guidance, practitioners are required to complete the EYFS Profile for each child. This statutory assessment provides a summary of every child's attainment against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and must be shared with both parents/carers and the Local Authority.

The EYFS Profile is based on:

Ongoing observational assessments recorded in the child's Learning Journey.

Tracking documentation that reflects progress across the seven areas of learning.

The professional judgement of the practitioner, using a 'best fit' approach.

Each child's attainment is recorded as either:

Emerging – not yet at the expected level.

Expected – working securely within the ELG.

This information is shared with parents during a summer term consultation, accompanied by a brief written report outlining:

The child's strengths across the prime and specific areas of learning.

Next steps to support continued development.

To support a smooth transition into Key Stage 1, the EYFS Leader provides the Year 1 teaching team with a detailed analysis of the EYFS Profile data. This includes:

Cohort-level insights into strengths and areas for development.

Individual needs that may require targeted support.

Recommendations for curriculum continuity and pedagogical approaches that reflect the developmental needs of the cohort.

This process ensures that Year 1 provision is informed by a deep understanding of each child's learning journey, promoting continuity and progression in line with the DfE's guidance on transition and curriculum alignment.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At Northiam Church of England Primary School, monitoring and evaluation are integral to ensuring a high-quality, continually evolving Early Years provision. These processes provide a clear overview of strengths and areas for development, directly informing strategic planning, target setting, and professional development (INSET), all tailored to the specific needs of the school.

Monitoring and evaluation are conducted through a range of methods to ensure a robust and comprehensive understanding of provision and outcomes:

- **Data Analysis:** Cohort, class, individual pupil, and vulnerable group data are regularly reviewed to identify trends and inform targeted interventions.

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- **Action Planning:** Data-driven priorities feed directly into the School Development Plan, ensuring alignment with whole-school improvement strategies.
- **Self-Evaluation:** Ongoing reflective practice contributes to the School Self-Evaluation Form (SEF), supporting a culture of continuous improvement.
- **Scrutiny of Work:** Children's Learning Journeys, work samples, and planning are reviewed to assess curriculum coverage, progression, and quality of learning experiences.
- **Planning Oversight:** Weekly and medium-term planning is monitored to ensure it reflects the EYFS curriculum and meets the needs of all learners.
- **Progress Tracking:** Children's progress is tracked systematically, with data used to inform teaching and learning.
- **Moderation:** Internal moderation of Learning Journeys is complemented by external moderation through DCAT and Rother District networks, ensuring consistency and accuracy in assessment.
- **Environment Review:** The Early Years environment is regularly evaluated and adapted to ensure it remains enabling, inclusive, and responsive to children's needs.
- **Observations:** Lesson observations and informal drop-ins are used to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, including the effectiveness of Teaching Assistants.
- **Stakeholder Voice:** Feedback is gathered through discussions and questionnaires with staff, children, and parents to inform practice and provision.
- **Staff Development:** Appraisal and performance management systems are in place for all Early Years staff, with ongoing CPD tailored to individual and team needs.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is strong and collaborative. The Headteacher oversees the quality of provision in Nursery and Reception in partnership with the EYFS Leader, SENCO, and Governors. Monitoring is carried out by the Headteacher, EYFS Leader, and Governors, ensuring accountability and strategic oversight.

Safeguarding and Welfare

At Northiam Church of England Primary School and Honeybees Preschool, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. We recognise that effective safeguarding is fundamental to ensuring that children remain safe, healthy and ready to learn.

Our safeguarding practice is underpinned by:

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (September 2026), particularly Section 3: Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.

Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Local Safeguarding Partnership procedures.

The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

For children in Nursery and Reception, the safeguarding requirements of the EYFS are implemented alongside the wider safeguarding expectations outlined within KCSIE 2026. The EYFS provides the statutory safeguarding requirements for children from birth to five, whilst KCSIE strengthens safeguarding culture, safer recruitment, staff conduct, information sharing, online safety and child protection arrangements within the school context. Together these frameworks ensure a robust, child-centred approach to safeguarding.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The school maintains a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs in line with KCSIE 2026 requirements. The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the school, including EYFS provision.

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All staff understand their responsibility to:

- Remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Record and report concerns promptly.
- Follow safeguarding procedures without delay.
- Contribute to a culture of vigilance and professional curiosity.

Safer Recruitment and Suitability of Staff

The school follows safer recruitment procedures in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and EYFS requirements.

This includes:

- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- Verification of identity, qualifications and employment history.
- Obtaining and scrutinising references prior to appointment.
- Assessment of suitability to work with children.
- Ongoing monitoring of staff suitability.

All adults working within the EYFS are expected to demonstrate high standards of professional conduct and safeguard children's welfare at all times.

Safeguarding Training

All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training during induction and regular updates thereafter. Staff receive training appropriate to their role, including:

- Child protection.
- Prevent Duty.
- Online safety.
- Behaviour and safeguarding.
- EYFS safeguarding requirements.
- Code of conduct expectations.

All staff are expected to read and understand relevant sections of KCSIE 2026.

Attendance and Children's Welfare

Regular attendance is monitored carefully.

Where a child is absent without explanation or there are concerns regarding patterns of absence:

Parents and carers are contacted promptly.

Alternative emergency contacts may be used where appropriate.

Safeguarding concerns are referred to the DSL.

Children's Social Care and/or the Police may be contacted where there are concerns regarding a child's safety or welfare.

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Online Safety and Screen Use

The school recognises the importance of teaching and modelling safe and appropriate use of technology.

In line with EYFS 2026 requirements, practitioners have regard to children's screen use and ensure that technology enhances learning whilst supporting children's wellbeing, development and interactions with others.

Whistleblowing

All staff are encouraged to raise concerns regarding poor practice or safeguarding issues. Concerns are taken seriously and managed in accordance with the school's Whistleblowing Policy and safeguarding procedures.

Information Sharing and Multi-Agency Working

Effective safeguarding relies on timely information sharing and partnership working. Staff work collaboratively with families, Children's Social Care, health services, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies to secure the best outcomes for children.

Inclusion & Special Education Needs

At Northiam Church of England Primary School, Early Years staff are proactive in identifying children who may require additional support. Through close observation and assessment, early interventions are swiftly implemented to ensure that every child makes progress in their learning, regardless of their starting point.

Working in close partnership with the SENCo, EYFS staff ensure that:

Early Identification of additional needs is prioritised through ongoing monitoring and assessment.

Liaison with External Agencies and Local Authority Specialist Support Teams is established to access appropriate expertise and resources.

Referrals for Additional Support are completed promptly and accurately, ensuring timely access to interventions.

Educational, Behavioural, and Health Care Plans are constructed and implemented collaboratively, with regular review to ensure effectiveness and relevance.

This inclusive approach reflects our commitment to equity and excellence. We are determined that all pupils, including those with SEND or emerging needs, achieve the best possible outcomes. Our provision is tailored, responsive, and underpinned by a belief that every child deserves to thrive.

Transitions

Starting Nursery or Reception is a significant milestone in a child's life. At Northiam Church of England Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that every child experiences a smooth, supported, and personalised transition into our Early Years setting. We recognise that a strong start lays the foundation for future learning, wellbeing, and success.

Our transition processes begin well before children enter our Nursery and continue through Reception and into Year 1, ensuring continuity and security for every child. These processes are designed to build strong relationships, foster emotional resilience, and ensure that children feel safe, valued, and ready to learn.

Transition strategies include:

- **New Parent Induction Meetings** to share key information, routines, and expectations.
- **'All About Me' Booklets** to gather insights into each child's interests, needs, and experiences.
- **Links with Local Pre-Schools** including staff visits to external settings to support continuity of care and learning.
- **Pre-School Group Sessions** to familiarise children with our environment and staff.
- **Staggered Starts** to allow children to settle gradually and confidently.

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- **‘Moving Up’ Visits** to meet new teachers and explore new classrooms, supporting transitions between year groups.

we ensure that:

- **Children’s emotional wellbeing is prioritised**, with warm, responsive relationships at the heart of our practice.
- **The learning environment is enabling and inclusive**, supporting independence and exploration.
- **Staff are skilled in observation and assessment**, enabling early identification of children who may need additional support.
- **Early interventions are implemented swiftly**, ensuring that all children can access the curriculum and make progress.

Key Worker System

At Northiam Church of England Primary School, we recognise the importance of secure relationships in supporting young children’s emotional wellbeing and development. To ensure every child in Honeybees Nursery and Reception Class receives high levels of attention and care, we implement a **Key Person approach**, creating a ‘team around the child’ ethos.

Each child is assigned a Key Person—typically the adult with whom they naturally bond during their initial settling-in sessions. In Reception, this role is fulfilled by the Class Teacher. The Key Person plays a central role in helping the child feel safe, secure, and valued within the setting.

Key responsibilities include:

Building secure attachments with the child to foster confidence and emotional resilience.

Establishing strong, professional partnerships with parents and carers, ensuring open communication and shared understanding of the child’s needs.

Providing continuity and reassurance, particularly during transitions and moments of personal care.

Supporting the child’s learning and development, tailoring provision to meet individual needs and interests.

Monitoring wellbeing and progress, and contributing to early identification of any additional needs.

This approach supports children in becoming familiar with the nursery and school environment, helping them to settle quickly and thrive. It also ensures that every child has a trusted adult who understands their unique personality, learning style, and developmental journey.

By embedding the Key Person system within our wider inclusive and nurturing ethos, we ensure that all children feel secure, cared for, and ready to learn from the very beginning of their time with us.

In conjunction with this Policy please also see the following:

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy

Health and Safety Policy

SEND and Inclusion Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour Policy

Review:

This Policy is a working document and is subject to amendment and change as appropriate.

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Date of policy: September 2025

Date of review: September 2026

EYFS Lead: Alex Loveday

Appendix

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

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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 and feelings 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 focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even 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 cooperatively 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 consideration for themselves and others.
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping, and climbing.

ELG: Fine Motor Skills

- Children at the expected level of development will:
- 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.

Children are taught to construct simple sentences orally before writing them. They use sentence stems and scaffolds to support independent writing. They apply phonics knowledge to spell words and form sentences, write for real-life purposes such as labels and messages, and use capital letters, finger spaces, and full stops in context. Handwriting fluency is developed through regular fine motor and letter formation practice.

Literacy

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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 a 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 evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

Understanding the World

ELG: Past and Present

- Talk about the lives of the 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, non-fiction texts and maps.
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences 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.

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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.