



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

St Margaret's Academy



School Vision

'We want ourselves and the children in our care to be successful, resilient and inquisitive learners who are happy and well-equipped to participate positively in the community and wider society.'

Reviewed Spring Term 2026

Dedicated Member of Staff: Mrs N O'Dwyer (Headteacher), Mrs Susannah Tandy (EYFS/KS1 Assistant head)

Contents

1. EYFS Aims
2. Legal Framework
3. Working with parents and carers
4. Principles of the EYFS
5. Our ethos
6. Curriculum and Learning
6. Transition to Year 1
7. Assessment
8. SEND/Inclusion/Equal Opportunities
9. Transition to KS1
10. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures informing the EYFS policy.

1. EYFS Aims

- Commitment to providing a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment in which children can thrive.
- Children access a broad and balanced curriculum that provides them with the knowledge and skills necessary for good progress through school and life
- Inclusion and equal opportunities for all children and anti-discriminatory practice
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning in line with the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) updated 2025.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents /carers

2. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- EYFS Statutory Framework (updated 2025)
- Children Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- SEND Code of Practice (2015) updated 2024
- [DfE nutrition guidance](#)

3. Working with Parents and Carers

Starting School

At St Margaret's Academy, children are eligible to join Reception full-time from the September of the year in which they turn five. It is parental choice as to whether they take up a full-time place at this point. However, in compliance with local authority admissions policy all children will be in school full time the term after which they turn five. Reception admissions are managed in accordance with the school admission policy. Some adjustments to this may be required for individual children who have special educational needs and require a gentle staggered introduction.

At St Margaret's Academy, the role that parents play in their child's learning is seen as fundamental in ensuring that their child achieves their full potential. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between staff and parents or carers.

To build this strong relationship, we offer the following:

- A home visit prior to starting school from 2 members of staff from the Reception team for every child and family
- An induction handbook to prepare you and your child for starting school
- A booklet containing 'Top Tips' for getting your child school ready [St Margaret's Academy - Starting School booklet](#)
- An invitation to our EYFS family picnic
- Our induction presentation for parents and a taster session in September where parents and carers may join their child for a couple of hours in school.

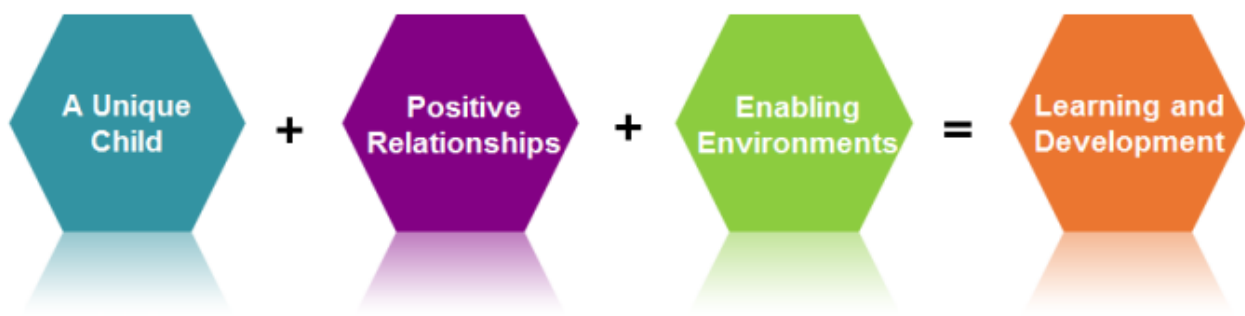
In addition to this throughout the year we offer:

- An open-door policy for parents and carers with any queries or concerns.
- Regular communication updates via the Class Dojo platform
- Inviting parents to a range of activities throughout the school year such as curriculum activities, Christmas crafts and shows, Sports Day etc.
- Parenting information workshops to support you to help your child at home with their learning

- Parent consultation meetings to discuss pupils' progress and their next steps
- A written report on your child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception.

4. Principles for EYFS

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS updated 2025) guides the work of practitioners based upon four guiding principles that shape the practice:



A Unique Child recognises each child as a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

At St Margaret's Academy, we know and understand:

- ***All children develop in individual ways and at varying rates***
- ***The diversity of individuals is valued and respected. No child shall be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special education needs, disability, gender or ability***
- ***Children will develop resilience when their physical and psychological well-being is protected by adults, when they feel safe***
- ***Children's health is integral to their well-being.***

Positive Relationships recognise that children learn best from secure and loving relationships with parents, carers and key adults.

At St Margaret's Academy, we know and understand:

- ***The quality of all relationships is a major influence on a child's learning and development***

• Parents are the child's first and most ensuring educators and we value the contribution they make. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with children and their families.

Enabling Environments stimulate and support children to feel confident, secure and challenged in their learning.

At St Margaret's Academy:

Children have access to a stimulating and comfortable learning environment with well planned, purposeful activities on offer to match their interests.

A rich and varied environment enables children to explore and learn in safe, secure, yet challenging indoor and outdoor spaces

Practitioners understand and observe, assess and plan effectively to support the needs of every child. They provide appropriate intervention and responses that engage pupils in their learning

Learning and Development takes place where the unique child is recognised, positive relationships are formed, and an enabling environment is provided.

At St Margaret's Academy, we know and understand that:

- Children learn through play and exploration that reflects their varied interests**
- Children learn best when they are actively engaged. Experiences build on what children already know and can do**
- The EYFS curriculum is carefully structured to provide stimulating experiences and allows opportunities for children to engage in both planned activities and those they initiate themselves**

5. Our Ethos

We believe that play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems. Our children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in interactions guided by adults. It is the role of staff to stimulate the children's interests, respond to each child's emerging needs and guide their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.

Our approach to learning is inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach and the work of Loris Malaguzzi (1920-94), an Italian educator and pedagogue.

“The Reggio Emilia Approach® is an educational philosophy based on the image of a child with strong potentialities for development and a subject with rights, who learns through the hundred languages belonging to all human beings, and grows in relations with others.”

Using this approach, children are encouraged to be creative and autonomous as they explore and learn in our stimulating environment. They choose their own fields of interest and in this way, we help them to develop critical thinking skills, logical reasoning and verbal communication. Through building strong and trusting relationships with children staff are able to support each child on their own individual learning journey

Malaguzzi defined the learning environment as ‘The Third Teacher’ which is flexible and responsive to the need for teachers and children to create learning together. Adults closely observe the children in play, weaving in opportunities for deepening and extending their learning. Enhancements to this continuous provision are frequently added to inspire new ideas and learning or broaden the children’s experiences. Teachers closely watch how children play, their interests and abilities, and respond to this by making changes to support development.

6. Curriculum and Learning

Our curriculum is based upon the learning and development requirements as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (updated 2025)

This framework includes **seven areas** of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected.

The Prime Areas of Learning:

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

The Specific Areas of Learning:

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

Our curriculum is delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences; where experiences are planned, the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child are taken into account.

Reviewed Annually – Latest review Spring Term 2026

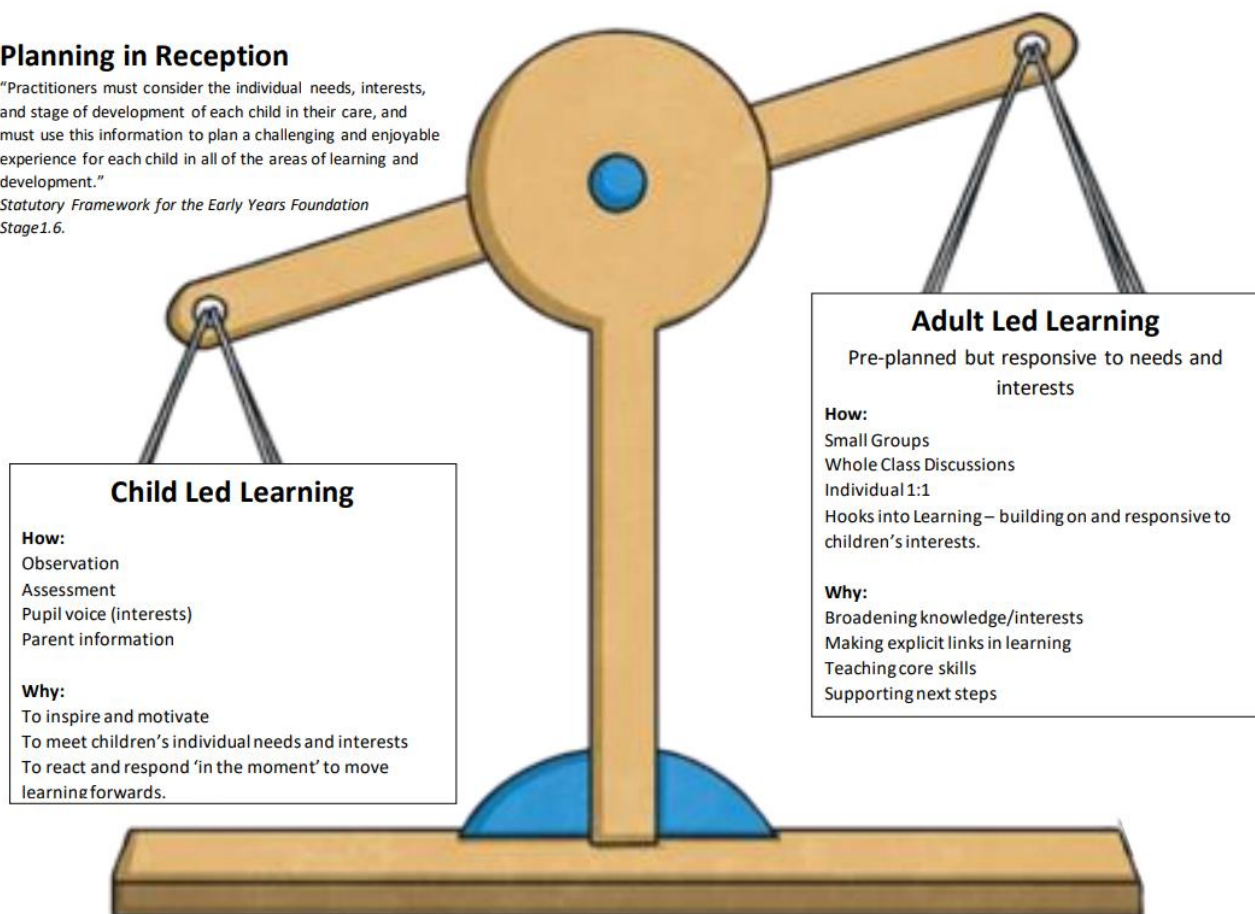
As children begin their reception journey heavy emphasis is placed upon the **Prime Areas** of Learning. These form the building blocks as they embark upon developing their skills and knowledge in the **Specific Areas**. We use topics as a tool to introduce new concepts in a child-friendly way and to broaden children’s knowledge and experiences whilst also enabling children to steer their learning according to their own particular interests. Our planned topics for learning may therefore change and adapt in response to our current cohort of children. [Reception Curriculum Overview for Parents 2025 2026 \(3\).pdf](#)

‘Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn and the most effective way to teach it’ (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021)

Planning in Reception

“Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 1.6.



The logo for Read Write Inc. features the text "Read Write Inc." in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font, set against a blue rectangular background with rounded corners.

We use the Read Write Inc. (RWInc.) scheme to develop children's phonic knowledge. For the development of early reading and writing, synthetic phonics is recognised as the prime approach. Our children receive a daily phonics session, taught in small groups according to their current reading level. Children are provided with reading materials for home learning, including picture books, which they choose independently from our 'Books to Share' library, Read Write Inc. Ditties, books and online links to the Read Write Inc. portal for phonic videos enhance the home-school link. We aim to provide children with a love of reading and use quality texts, both fiction and non-fiction, to develop vocabulary, imagination, knowledge of the world and comprehension skills

The logo for Drawing Club features the text "DRAWING CLUB" in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font, with "AN ADVENTURE INTO STORY" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font below it, all set against a yellow rectangular background.

We want children at St Margaret's to enjoy writing and have the chance to be creative. Drawing Club brings imagination to life. Vocabulary is introduced in a contextual way. Drawing develops both the hand, ready for writing, and the mind. This approach to writing has been proven to have a huge impact on children's confidence and enthusiasm to write! Every interaction with each child in Drawing Club is keyed into their next unique step.



We develop mathematical knowledge and skills through a daily adult led session followed by opportunities to practise and deepen new learning through playful experiences within continuous provision. At St Margaret's, we use the scheme 'Mastering Number' (NCETM) which aims to secure firm foundations in the development of good number sense for all children from Reception through to KS1.

7. Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils both in their independent play and within adult led activity, to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape

future planning and provision. Observations shared by parents and carers of their children are also considered.

Development Matters is used as a guide to making best-fit summative judgements about whether a child is showing typical development, may be at risk of delay or is ahead for their age. This information is shared with parents and carers both informally and at parent consultations. [Development Matters](#)

Within the first 6 weeks of starting school, staff will administer the **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)** for every child. The RBA is a short, interactive and practical assessment of your child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school. The main purpose is to create a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils. It is not about judging or labelling your child or putting them under any pressure. Your child cannot 'pass' or 'fail' the assessment.

The RBA gives your child valuable one to one time with their teacher at an early stage, helping them to understand your child better. It provides a helpful snapshot of your child's skills and abilities when they enter reception, allowing teachers to support your child in the most appropriate way.

At the end of the Reception year, staff complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for every child. This assesses them against the 17 Early Learning Goals and builds a comprehensive picture of what each child knows and can do. Teacher judgements are based on the observations gathered throughout the year and are moderated both internally within the school and anonymously within local schools. When the children are assessed, they are recorded as either '**meeting expected levels of development**' or '**working towards expected levels of development**'. The results of the Early Years Foundation Stage profile are shared with parents in their end of year academic report and parents can request an additional consultation with their child's teacher at this point. Early Years Foundation Stage profile data is submitted to the local authority.

8. SEND/Inclusion/Equal Opportunities

All children must have access to a broad, balanced and appropriately adapted curriculum in which they learn, make progress and experience success. St Margaret's Academy is committed to providing the necessary resources for early identification, assessment and support for all children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Where a child may be identified as having a special educational need or disability, the school SENCo (Mrs Essam) will work in close partnership with the child's parents/carers and staff to plan appropriate provision, make adaptations to the learning or environment and liaise with outside supporting agencies as appropriate. For further details please see our school SEN policy and the Torbay Local Offer [Torbay Local SEND offer](#)

We provide inclusive education that reflects and celebrates diversity. We support children with EAL (English as an Additional Language) through visual aids, modelling and language scaffolds. We respect, embrace and celebrate all cultures and religious practices within our setting in line with the EYFS profile (updated 2025)

9. Transition to KS1

We pride ourselves on our transition to KS1 and we continue to develop this to ensure that children leave Reception ready for Year 1. To build upon the positive relationships built during foundation we begin enhanced transitions to Year 1 throughout the summer term. Children have regular visits to the classrooms and shared areas of KS1 to ensure that the transition is seamless and positive. At the end of reception year, teachers will give year 1 teachers a copy of each child's EYFS profile, including a record of the child's outcomes against the 17 Early Learning Goals. In Year 1 we continue to offer a play-based provision that embraces the principles of the EYFS framework. We believe that the benefits of play support all areas of a child's development and this should not end at the end of their reception year. A dedicated Year 1 outdoor area has been developed to provide the space and variety needed to enhance play behaviours. Practitioners in Year 1 are trained to facilitate play and foster links to the National Curriculum building on from the Early Learning Goals.

10. Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Mrs N Turner

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs N O'Dwyer

We recognise that 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. At St Margaret's Academy we ensure that all practitioners are supported and confident to implement our safeguarding policy. We uphold the highest standards for safeguarding and welfare requirements in line with the EYFS and KCSiE (2024). We follow safer recruitment, whistleblowing and health and safety procedures robustly.

Training

Safeguarding training is completed at the start of each academic year. Any updates from KCSiE (Keeping Children safe in Education 2025) are shared with staff. Staff continue to be updated throughout the year. All staff are DBS-checked and trained in child protection.

Staff to Child Ratios

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff to pupil ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils.

Trainees and apprentices must hold valid PFA (Paediatric First Aid) certification to be counted in staff-to-child ratios.

Mealtimes and Nutrition

The following approach aligns with guidance from the Department for Education and supports our safeguarding and health and safety responsibilities effective from 1st September 2025.

At St Margaret's Academy, we are committed to promoting the health, safety, and wellbeing of all children in our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting. This includes ensuring safe and supportive practices during mealtimes and maintaining appropriate first aid provision at all times.

We recognise that mealtimes are a valuable opportunity for children to develop social skills, independence, and healthy habits. To ensure safety and promote a calm, positive environment all children are required to **sit down while eating or drinking**, whether indoors or outdoors. Staff actively supervise mealtimes to encourage good table manners and to reduce the risk of choking. Children are encouraged to eat at a relaxed pace and are never rushed. Staff model appropriate behaviour and engage in conversation to support language development and social interaction. We encourage healthy snacks and all of our school meal options reflect recent changes in the EYFS framework [St Margaret's Academy - Reception Food and Nutrition](#)

Paediatric First Aid Provision

To ensure the highest level of care and responsiveness:

At least one member of staff with a current paediatric first aid certificate is present at all times when children are on the premises, whilst eating and any off-site visits. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required. First aid kits are regularly checked and restocked, and are easily accessible in all EYFS areas. Any accidents or incidents are recorded promptly and shared with parents/carers via our school comms system in line with our accident reporting procedures.

Toileting and intimate care

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework, St Margaret's Academy will ensure that there are suitable hygienic changing facilities for changing any children who are still in

nappies. Children’s privacy will be considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting.

Allergies

We are committed to having ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. This information will be kept up to date by the school and added to the child’s medical records. All staff, including kitchen staff, will be made aware of this information.

Attendance & Emergency Contacts

- We will act promptly on unexplained or prolonged absences and keep clear attendance records.
- Each child must have at least two emergency contact numbers on file. Passwords are expected to be shared with any adult collecting a child.

General Health and Hygiene

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general through our planned curriculum learning. We use the Jigsaw PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) scheme to enhance teaching and learning against the Prime area of Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

At St Margaret’s we also take part in the Government Supervised Toothbrushing

Scheme. For further details see here: [Government Toothbrushing Scheme](#)

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school’s child protection policy. This policy will be reviewed every year. At every review, the policy will be shared with, and approved by the academy Trustees.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures informing this policy.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found? (School Website)
Safeguarding policy and procedures	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies.
Procedure for responding to illness	First Aid Policy
Administering medicines policy	Health and Safety Policy

	Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	Visitor Policy and Contractors Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies
Procedure for dealing with concerns or complaints	The Complaints Policy on our website
Accident and reporting procedures	First Aid Policy
Intimate Care procedures	Intimate Care Policy