MARNER
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Policy

Policy Owner	Stuart Seamark (AH)
Approval Body	Governing Body
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Purpose and scope

This policy explains how Marner Primary School provides education and care for children in Nursery and Reception. It sets out our curriculum, assessment, partnership, staffing, safeguarding and welfare arrangements under the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework effective from 1 September 2026.

The policy applies to all staff, governors, volunteers and students working in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It should be read alongside the school policies listed in Appendix 1. Where another school policy contains the detailed procedure, staff must follow that procedure.

1 Aims and principles

Our early years provision aims to ensure that:

- *children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe*
- *children experience a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that builds secure foundations for later learning and life*
- *teaching is consistently responsive so that every child can make progress*
- *staff work closely with parents, carers and other professionals*
- *every child is included through equality of opportunity, reasonable adjustment and anti-discriminatory practice*
- *children develop confidence, independence, curiosity, language and a positive attitude to learning*

Our practice reflects the four guiding principles of the EYFS:

- *The unique child. Every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.*
- *Positive relationships. Children learn to be strong and independent through secure, respectful relationships.*
- *Enabling environments. Adults organise time, spaces and resources carefully and respond to children's interests and needs.*
- *Learning and development. Children develop at different rates and need appropriate teaching, support and challenge.*

2 Statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026. It also has regard to the latest versions of Keeping Children Safe in Education, the SEND Code of Practice and other relevant statutory guidance.

Official guidance: EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

3 Structure of the EYFS

Marner is a maintained community primary school. Its EYFS comprises a 104-place Nursery and three Reception classes. Children normally enter Nursery from age three and remain within the EYFS until the end of Reception.

Nursery provides funded early education places, including extended entitlements where families are eligible and places are available. Current session patterns, eligibility information and application arrangements are published separately so families receive accurate information for the relevant academic year. Applications for Reception are managed through the local authority admissions process.

Reception operates a soft start between 8.45am and 9.00am and the EYFS school day finishes at 3.20pm. Children belong to a class or key group for registration, direct teaching and pastoral support. They also learn through continuous provision across carefully organised indoor and outdoor areas.

Staff plan transition carefully when children join Nursery or Reception, move between EYFS groups and transfer to Year 1. They use information from families, previous settings and relevant professionals to identify strengths, needs and reasonable adjustments from the outset.

4 Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to build the knowledge, skills, language and dispositions children need. It is broad, ambitious and responsive to the children at Marner. The curriculum reflects our diverse community, values children's home languages and experiences, and gives children meaningful opportunities to encounter people, places, stories and ideas beyond their immediate experience.

4.1 Areas of learning and development

The EYFS includes seven interconnected areas of learning and development. The three prime areas are:

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

The four specific areas, which strengthen and apply the prime areas, are:

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

4.2 Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

In planning and guiding learning, staff consider how children learn as well as what they learn. Children are supported to:

- *play and explore by investigating, experiencing and having a go*
- *learn actively by concentrating, persisting and enjoying achievement*
- *create and think critically by developing ideas, making links and choosing ways to do things*

4.3 Planning

Staff use their knowledge of children, assessment information, the educational programmes and the planned progression of knowledge and skills to decide what children need to learn next. Planning identifies clear learning intentions while allowing adults to respond to children's interests, questions and experiences.

The environment is part of the curriculum. Staff review indoor and outdoor provision so that resources are accessible, purposeful and increasingly challenging. Planned adult-led teaching, guided groups and sustained shared thinking sit alongside high-quality child-initiated play. Staff adapt provision and teaching for children with SEND, children learning English as an additional language and children who need further support or challenge.

If staff are concerned about progress, particularly within the prime areas, they discuss this promptly with parents or carers and the SENCo. The school agrees support, seeks specialist advice where appropriate and reviews the impact of provision.

4.4 Teaching

High vocabulary interactions are central to teaching in the EYFS. Adults model language, introduce vocabulary, explain, demonstrate, question, give feedback and help children sustain attention and extend their thinking. They recognise when to join children's play and when to allow children time to explore independently.

Reception children receive daily systematic synthetic phonics teaching through the THEP programme. Early reading is supported by well-matched decodable books, storytelling, rhyme, shared reading and a rich range of core texts. Mathematics develops through direct teaching, practical exploration, mathematical talk, stories, routines and problem solving. Across Nursery and Reception, children develop fine and gross motor control, communication, self-regulation, independence and the knowledge needed to access the wider curriculum.

As children develop, the balance gradually shifts towards more direct teaching of essential knowledge and skills. This supports a confident transition to Year 1 without narrowing the breadth, play and active learning that characterise effective early years practice.

4.5 Inclusion and equality

All children are entitled to participate fully. Staff make reasonable adjustments to teaching, routines, communication, resources and the environment. They work with the SENCo, families and relevant professionals to understand needs and implement individual plans. Support is integrated into everyday provision wherever possible so that children remain part of their class and the wider EYFS community.

For children whose home language is not English, staff value and encourage use of the home language in play and learning while providing frequent, well-planned opportunities to develop English. Staff do not treat learning more than one language as a special educational need.

5 Assessment

Ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of teaching. Staff observe, listen and interact to identify what children know, can do and are interested in. They use this knowledge to respond in the moment, plan future teaching and identify where a child may need additional support or challenge. Information from parents, carers and other professionals contributes to this picture.

Assessment is proportionate. Staff draw on their knowledge of each child and their professional judgement; they are not required to collect physical evidence to prove every judgement. Records support teaching, communication and statutory assessment rather than replacing time spent interacting with children.

5.1 Starting Reception

Within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception, staff administer the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment. This short, practical assessment covers early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. Its purpose is to provide a starting point for the national primary progress measure; it is not used to judge the child, the teacher or Marner's early years provision.

5.2 The end of the EYFS

In the final term of the academic year in which a child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June, staff complete the EYFS Profile. Each child is assessed against the 17 early learning goals as either meeting the expected level of development or emerging.

The Profile is based on staff knowledge and professional judgement. It is completed for every child, including children with SEND, with appropriate reasonable adjustments to the assessment process. Judgements are moderated internally and, where appropriate, with other schools or the local authority.

The school shares the Profile with parents and carers and provides a copy to the Year 1 teacher. Reception and Year 1 staff discuss each child's development, strengths and learning needs so that Year 1 provision builds from the child's EYFS experience. Profile data is submitted to the local authority when required.

6 Working with Parents and Carers

Children learn best when families and school share information and work together. Staff establish respectful, two-way communication from the point of admission and make reasonable adjustments so that meetings and information are accessible.

In Nursery, each child is assigned a key person. The key person helps the child settle, supports learning and care, builds a relationship with the family and helps the family access specialist support where appropriate. In Reception, the class team works together under the direction of the class teacher to provide this continuity.

The school keeps parents and carers informed through regular informal communication, planned meetings, workshops, curriculum information and an annual written report. Families are encouraged to share information about learning, interests, health, language, culture and significant changes at home.

Where possible, families provide more than two emergency contact numbers and keep these details up to date.

Concerns should first be discussed with the class teacher or key person. Families may then contact the EYFS Phase Leader, EYFS Strategic Lead, SENCo or a member of the senior leadership team, depending on the issue. Formal concerns are handled under the school's Complaints Policy.

7 Staff

7.1 Leadership and responsibilities

The Headteacher retains overall responsibility for the EYFS. The EYFS Strategic Lead provides strategic direction and quality assurance. The EYFS Phase Leader coordinates day-to-day practice, curriculum implementation, staff development and transition. Class teachers and key persons plan, teach, assess, communicate with families and safeguard children. The SENCo coordinates support for children with SEND.

7.2 Staffing ratios and supervision

Staffing arrangements meet children's needs and keep them safe. In Marner's maintained Nursery classes for children aged three and over, there is at least one member of staff for every 13 children. At least one member of staff is a school teacher and at least one other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification, as required by the EYFS framework.

Reception classes comply with infant class size legislation and are organised with no more than 30 pupils per school teacher during an ordinary teaching session, subject to permitted exceptions. Additional adults are deployed according to children's needs, the activity, the environment and risk assessment. Children are adequately supervised at all times, especially while eating and on outings.

7.3 Training and professional supervision

All staff receive induction covering their role, safeguarding, child protection, emergency evacuation, health and safety and relevant school procedures. The school provides professional development so staff can deliver high-quality learning, development and care.

EYFS safeguarding training meets the criteria in Annex C of the current EYFS framework and is renewed at least every two years. The school provides updates and refresher training when needed and at least annually in line with wider school safeguarding arrangements. The DSL provides ongoing advice and guidance. Staff have appropriate opportunities for professional supervision, coaching and confidential discussion of concerns about children's development, wellbeing or safety.

7.4 Safer recruitment and whistleblowing

The school follows the safer recruitment requirements in the current EYFS framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education. It verifies identity, qualifications, employment history, references and suitability and completes the required criminal record, barred list and overseas checks. Information is recorded on the school's single central record where required.

Staff, trainees and volunteers must raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice under the Whistleblowing Policy. Concerns are normally reported to the Headteacher. A concern about the Headteacher is reported to the Chair of the Governing Body. No person who raises a concern in good faith will face disciplinary action because the concern is not substantiated; deliberately malicious allegations may be addressed under the relevant procedures.

8 Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, their individual needs are met and they have positive relationships with adults. Every practitioner is responsible for safeguarding and remains alert to concerns in a child's life at home, in school or elsewhere. The detailed procedures in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy apply throughout the EYFS.

8.1 Safeguarding concerns and allegations

Staff record and report concerns promptly to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy and follow the school's reporting procedures. The DSL decides on referrals to Tower Hamlets children's social care and other agencies. In an emergency, staff contact the police or emergency services.

An allegation that a member of staff, supply staff member, volunteer, trainee or contractor may have harmed a child or posed a risk of harm is reported immediately to the Headteacher. An allegation about the Headteacher is reported to the Chair of the Governing Body. Where there is a conflict of interest, the concern is reported directly to the local authority designated officer. Low-level concerns are managed under the school's Low-Level Concerns Policy and safeguarding procedures.

8.2 Attendance and unexplained absence

The school follows up EYFS absence promptly in line with its Attendance Policy. Parents and carers are expected to report absence and explain the reason. If a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period, staff attempt to contact parents, carers and alternative emergency contacts. Staff consider patterns, the child's and family's circumstances and any vulnerability. Safeguarding concerns are referred to children's social care and a police welfare check is requested where appropriate.

8.3 Paediatric first aid

At least one person with a current full paediatric first aid certificate, consistent with Annex A of the EYFS framework, is on the premises and available whenever children are present and accompanies children on outings. The school considers the number of children, staffing and layout so a qualified first aider can respond quickly. Certificates are renewed every three years and staff are included in ratios only where qualification and paediatric first aid requirements are met.

8.4 Health medicines and oral health

The school promotes children's physical and oral health. Procedures for illness, infection control, medical needs and the administration of medicines are set out in the Health and Safety Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy. Medicines are administered only under the agreed procedure and are stored securely.

Children learn about healthy food, the effect of too many sugary foods and drinks, and the importance of brushing teeth. Staff support self-care and hygiene through routines and age-appropriate teaching. Fresh drinking water is always available.

8.5 Safer eating allergies and nutrition

Meals, snacks and drinks provided by the school are healthy, balanced and nutritious and have regard to the EYFS nutrition guidance. Before admission, the school obtains information about dietary requirements, preferences, allergies, intolerances and relevant health needs. This information is kept up to date and shared with staff who prepare, check or serve food. Allergy action plans are agreed with families and health professionals where appropriate.

While children are eating, a member of staff with a current full paediatric first aid certificate is in the room. Children are seated safely, supervised within sight and hearing and supported to eat in ways that reduce choking and food- sharing risks. Food is prepared and presented in a way that is suitable for each child's developmental needs. Any choking incident requiring intervention is recorded, shared with the family and reviewed so practice can be improved.

8.6 Accidents injuries and first aid

An appropriately stocked first aid box is accessible. The school records accidents, injuries and first aid treatment and informs parents or carers on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable. Serious incidents are managed and reported to the relevant authority in line with statutory requirements and school procedures.

8.7 Behaviour and physical intervention

Staff support behaviour through secure relationships, clear routines, co-regulation, appropriate boundaries and teaching children how to communicate and manage feelings. Physical intervention is used only when necessary to prevent injury or serious damage, is reasonable and proportionate, and is recorded and reported in line with the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures.

8.8 Premises outings and risk management

Indoor and outdoor spaces, equipment and resources are suitable for the children and activities provided. Staff complete daily checks, maintain clear evacuation routes and manage identified hazards. The school has appropriate fire detection, emergency evacuation and lockdown arrangements. Adults assess and manage risks while preserving appropriate opportunities for children to explore, develop independence and learn how to keep themselves safe.

Outings are planned under the Educational Visits Policy. Risk assessment considers the location, transport, individual needs, supervision, paediatric first aid and staff-to-child ratios.

8.9 Toileting intimate care and privacy

Children have access to suitable toilets and handwashing facilities. Hygienic changing facilities and necessary supplies are available for children who need them. Staff support toileting and intimate care in a way that protects dignity, privacy and safeguarding, following individual care plans and the school's Intimate Care Policy where required.

8.10 Collection visitors and site security

Children are released only to adults authorised by a parent or carer. Staff follow the school procedure if a child is not collected, if an unfamiliar adult arrives or if there is concern about an adult's capacity to collect safely. Children do not leave the premises unsupervised. Visitors are identified, signed in, supervised as required and managed under the school's safeguarding procedures.

8.11 Screen use images and information

Screen use is purposeful, limited and appropriate to children's age and development. It supports teaching or access rather than replacing talk, movement, play and first-hand experience. Staff follow the school's Online Safety, Data Protection and Acceptable Use policies when using devices, recording learning or taking and sharing images.

Staff do not use personal mobile phones, cameras or other personal devices to photograph or record children. Only school-approved devices and accounts may be used for an authorised educational or safeguarding purpose, in accordance with the school's procedures for storage, access and sharing.

Records are accurate, secure and accessible only to people with a professional or legal right to see them. Information is shared lawfully to safeguard children and meet their needs. Parents and carers may access records about their child subject to relevant legal exemptions.

9 Monitoring and review

The EYFS Strategic Lead and EYFS Phase Leader monitor implementation through curriculum review, visits to provision, professional discussion, assessment information, safeguarding checks and feedback from children, families and staff. Findings inform improvement planning and professional development.

The Headteacher reviews this policy annually, following any significant statutory change or sooner if practice changes. The Governing Body approves the policy and receives assurance that statutory EYFS requirements are met.

Appendix 1 Related Policies and Procedures

The following school policies and procedures provide the detailed arrangements that support this policy. The current versions are available through the school office or school website as appropriate.

EYFS requirement or area	Marner policy or procedure
Safeguarding and child protection	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Reporting concerns about adults	Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns procedures
Safer recruitment and suitability	Safer Recruitment procedures and Single Central Record
Whistleblowing	Whistleblowing Policy
Attendance and unexplained absence	Attendance Policy
Illness infection and first aid	Health and Safety Policy and First Aid procedures
Medicines and health needs	Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
SEND and reasonable adjustments	SEND Policy and SEN Information Report
Behaviour and physical intervention	Behaviour Policy and Positive Handling procedures
Intimate care	Intimate Care Policy
Emergency evacuation and lockdown	Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation procedures and Lockdown Policy
Outings and visits	Educational Visits Policy
Online safety devices and images	Online Safety Policy Acceptable Use agreements and Data Protection Policy
Missing child and collection	Safeguarding procedures for missing children and uncollected children
Complaints	Complaints Policy