



### Why is the EYFS different to the National Curriculum?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum serve different age groups and educational purposes within the UK education system, leading to differences in their structure, content, and approach to teaching and learning.

The differences between the EYFS and the National Curriculum are not arbitrary but are instead deeply rooted in understandings of child development, educational objectives, and the most effective methods for teaching children at different stages of their growth. These frameworks are designed to complement each other, providing a continuum of education that supports children's development from infancy through to adolescence, ensuring they receive the right support and challenge at each stage of their educational journey.

Age Group and Developmental Stage	
The EYFS is designed for children from birth up to the age of 5, covering the crucial early years of a child's development, including nursery and reception years in school.	The National Curriculum, on the other hand, is for children aged 5 to 16, covering Key Stages 1 to 4. The developmental needs of children in these age ranges are significantly different, requiring distinct educational frameworks.
Educational Focus	
The EYFS emphasises learning through play, exploration, and practical activities. It aims to support children's development in a holistic way, focusing on seven key areas of learning: Communication and Language; Physical Development; Personal, Social, and Emotional Development; Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World; and Expressive Arts and	The National Curriculum is more subject-focused, with a defined set of subjects that children need to study as they progress through school. It includes core subjects like English, Maths, and Science, as well as foundation subjects such as History, Geography, Art, and Physical Education. The curriculum becomes increasingly structured and academically oriented as students move up the Key Stages.

<p>Design. The approach is very child centred, promoting the importance of safeguarding and welfare alongside learning and development.</p>	
<p>Assessment and Outcomes</p>	
<p>The EYFS uses ongoing observation and assessment to understand each child's level of development and to tailor support to their individual needs. The assessment at the end of the EYFS is the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, which summarizes each child's achievements.</p>	<p>The National Curriculum, however, uses more formal assessments, including SATs at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, and GCSEs at the end of Key Stage 4, to measure academic achievement in specific subjects.</p>
<p>Flexibility</p>	
<p>The EYFS offers more flexibility in how learning is delivered, allowing early years providers to tailor activities to the interests and developmental levels of individual children.</p> <p>It recognises that young children learn best when they are engaged and enjoying themselves, and when the learning is relevant to their lives and interests. The EYFS framework is designed to be flexible, allowing educators to adapt to the individual needs and pace of each child's development.</p>	<p>The National Curriculum, while allowing for some flexibility in how subjects are taught, sets more specific standards and expectations for what children should learn and achieve at each Key Stage.</p> <p>The teaching becomes more formal and structured, with a greater emphasis on direct instruction, subject-specific lessons, and standardised assessments. This approach is based on the belief that as children mature, they benefit from a more organised and consistent educational structure that challenges them academically and prepares them for examinations and future studies.</p>
<p>Developmental Psychology</p>	
<p>The EYFS is based on the understanding that the early years of a child's life are crucial for cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. During this period, children learn best in a nurturing environment that promotes exploration and learning through play. The framework is designed to be flexible to cater to the rapid and varied development that occurs from birth to age 5. It emphasises the importance of creating strong foundations for good future progress through school and life.</p>	<p>As children grow older and enter the formal schooling system, their ability to engage with more structured and subject-specific learning increases. The National Curriculum reflects a shift towards academic skills and knowledge acquisition appropriate for older children, who are developmentally ready to handle more traditional and formal educational approaches.</p>

These differences reflect the evolving needs and capabilities of children as they grow, ensuring that education in the UK is age-appropriate and supports a broad range of development from early childhood through to adolescence.

### **How is the Wider Curriculum taught in the EYFS?**

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the curriculum is made up of The Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL) and the Prime & Specific Areas of Learning (AoL).

The CoEL underpin the learning experiences provided through the AoL. This approach supports child development as it recognises the importance of the learning process as well as acquiring knowledge and skills.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are; **Playing & Exploring**, **Active Learning** and **Creating and Thinking Critically** and they support the ways in which children learn. By developing these characteristics, the EYFS aims to equip the children with the skills they need to be lifelong learners.

#### **Playing & Exploring:**

This characteristic encourages the children to engage with the world around them through hands-on experiences.

#### **Active Learning:**

This characteristic encourages the children to take ownership and independence over their learning. It focuses on the importance of concentration and being involved.

#### **Creating & Thinking Critically:**

This characteristic encourages children to develop their own ideas, make decisions and solve problems.

In the EYFS, the wider curriculum is taught through a play-based and child-centred approach that includes the seven areas of learning;

Communication & Language  
Physical Development  
Personal, Social & Emotional Development  
Literacy  
Mathematics  
Understanding the World  
Expressive Arts & Design

The Prime Areas of learning focus on the fundamental skills that are needed for overall development. These skills lay the foundation for learning in other areas.

The specific areas of learning focus on more specific knowledge and skills. These build upon the Prime Areas and provide more targeted learning experiences.

### **How is learning facilitated in the EYFS?**

Learning in the EYFS is facilitated through a combination of child-initiated play and planned, purposeful activities. Teachers create a rich, stimulating environment that encourages exploration and discovery. They observe children's interests and use them as a basis for planning activities that support and promote development across the Areas of Learning. In the EYFS, play is at the centre of learning; allowing children to engage in activities that promote communication, problem-solving and social skills. Teachers support and scaffold learning experiences and adapt their approach to support children's individual needs.

### **What learning approaches are used in the EYFS?**

#### **Play-Based Learning:**

Play is at the centre of how a child learns in the EYFS. Play opportunities allow children to be creative, solve problems and develop their social skills.

#### **Child-Centred Approach:**

The EYFS curriculum is carefully developed with the children's needs and interests in mind. The role of the adult is to be a 'play partner' by observing, scaffolding and extending children's play experiences.

#### **Observation & Assessment:**

Adults will closely monitor children's progress and assess their development against age-appropriate milestones. This information can then guide future planning and extended learning opportunities.

#### **Communication Skills:**

Learning in the EYFS put an emphasis on communication skills and language development with both adults and peers.

#### **Real-life Experiences:**

Learning is often linked to real-life experiences, helping children to understand and make connections between what they learn and their own lives.

### How is learning assessed in the EYFS?

In the EYFS, learning is assessed through ongoing observations that are carried out by adults in the setting; this helps to 'build a picture' of each individual child's learning and development. Teachers may use a range of methods to build a clear understanding of a child's development in the EYFS. These include;

**Observation:** Teachers closely observe children during their play, interactions and activities. Teachers take note of children's interests, skills and development and plan accordingly to build on these.

**Formative Assessment:** Through everyday interactions, continuous assessments take place helping teachers understand a child's learning journey and adapt learning approaches as needed.

**Summative Assessment:** Teachers use the EYFS framework to assess a child's development in each area of learning. They use developmental milestones and checkpoints (from documents such as Development Matters) to assess whether children are meeting age-appropriate expectations.

**Individual Learning Plans:** Tailored plans may be created for children that require additional support or challenges based on their unique learning needs.

### Which Areas of Learning link to Wider Curriculum Areas?

National Curriculum Subject	Link to the EYFS Areas of Learning	In Reception Children will be learning to:	Early Learning Goal:
Science	Communication & Language	Learn New Vocabulary  Ask questions to find out more and to check they understand what has been said to them.  Articulate their ideas and thought sin well-formed sentences.	Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.

		<p>Describe events in some detail.</p> <p>Use talk to help work out problems and organise thinking and activities, and to explain how things work and why they might happen.</p>	
	Personal, Social & Emotional Development	<p>Show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge</p> <p>Know and talk about the different factors that support their overall health and wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular physical activity</li> <li>- Healthy Eating</li> <li>- Toothbrushing</li> <li>- Sensible amounts of 'screen time'.</li> <li>- Having a good sleep routine</li> <li>- Being a safe pedestrian</li> </ul>	<p>Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.</p>
	Understanding the World	<p>Explore the natural world around them.</p> <p>Describe what they see hear and feel while they are outside.</p> <p>Recognise some environments are different to the one in which they live.</p> <p>Understand the effect of changing seasons on the natural world around them.</p>	<p>Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.</p>

PSHE	Communication & Language	<p>Use talk to help work out problems and organise thinking and activities, and to explain how things work and why they might happen.</p> <p>Develop social phrases.</p>	<p>Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teachers and peers.</p> <p>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.</p>
	Personal, Social & Emotional Development	<p>See themselves as a valuable individual.</p> <p>Build constructive and respectful relationships.</p> <p>Express their feelings and consider the feelings of others.</p> <p>Show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.</p> <p>Identify and moderate their own feelings socially and emotionally.</p> <p>Think about the perspectives of others.</p> <p>Manage their own needs.</p> <p>Know and talk about the different factors that support their overall health and wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular physical activity</li> <li>- Healthy eating</li> </ul>	<p>Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly.</p> <p>Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.</p> <p>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</p> <p>Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.</p> <p>Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Toothbrushing</li> <li>- Sensible amounts of 'screen time'</li> <li>- Having a good sleep routine</li> <li>- Being a safe pedestrian</li> </ul>	<p>Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.</p> <p>Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others.</p> <p>Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers.</p> <p>Show sensitivity to their own and others' needs.</p>
	Physical Development	<p>Further develop the skills they need to manage the school day successfully:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lining up and queuing</li> <li>- Mealtimes</li> </ul>	Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others.
	Understanding the World	<p>Talk about members of their immediate family and community.</p> <p>Name and describe people who are familiar to them.</p> <p>Recognise that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways.</p>	Talk about the lives of people around them and their roles in society.
PE	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	<p>Manage their own needs.</p> <p>Know and talk about the different factors that support overall health and wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular physical activity</li> </ul>	<p>Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of a challenge.</p> <p>Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.</p>



			<p>Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing.</p> <p>Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others.</p>
	Physical Development	<p>Revise and refine the fundamental movement skills they have already acquired:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rolling</li> <li>- crawling</li> <li>- walking</li> <li>- jumping</li> <li>- running</li> <li>- hopping</li> <li>- skipping</li> <li>- climbing</li> </ul> <p>Progress towards a more fluent style of moving, with developing control and grace.</p> <p>Develop overall body-strength, balance, coordination and agility needed to engage successfully with future physical education sessions and other physical disciplines, including dance, gymnastics, sport and swimming.</p> <p>Combine different movements with ease and fluency.</p>	<p>Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others.</p> <p>Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing.</p> <p>Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.</p>

		<p>Confidently and safely use a range of large and small apparatus indoors and outdoors, alone and in a group.</p> <p>Develop overall body strength, balance, coordination and agility.</p>	
	Expressive Arts & Design	<p>Explore, use and refine a variety of artistic effects to express their ideas and feelings.</p> <p>Return to and build on their previous learning, refining ideas and developing their ability to represent them.</p> <p>Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources and skills.</p> <p>Listen attentively, move to and talk about music, expressing their feelings and responses.</p> <p>Watch and talk about dance and performance art, expressing their feelings and responses.</p> <p>Explore and engage in music making and dance, performing solo or in groups.</p>	<p>Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and (when appropriate) try to move in time with music.</p>
Music	Communication & Language	<p>Listen carefully to rhymes and songs, paying attention to how they sound.</p> <p>Learn rhymes, poems and songs.</p>	

	Expressive Arts & Design	<p>Explore, use and refine a variety of artistic effects to express their ideas and feelings.</p> <p>Return to and build on their previous learning, refining ideas and developing their ability to represent them.</p> <p>Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources and skills.</p> <p>Listen attentively, move to and talk about music, expressing their feelings and responses.</p> <p>Sing in a group or on their own, increasingly matching the pitch and following the melody.</p> <p>Explore and engage in music making and dance, performing solo or in groups.</p>	<p>Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs.</p> <p>Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and (when appropriate) try to move in time with music.</p>
Computing	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	<p>Show resilience and perseverance in the face of a challenge.</p> <p>Know and talk about the different factors that support their overall health and wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sensible amounts of 'screen time'.</li> </ul>	<p>Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.</p> <p>Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.</p>
Art	Physical Development	<p>Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently.</p>	<p>Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing - using the tripod grip in almost all cases.</p>

		<p>Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.</p> <p>Develop overall body-strength, balance, coordination and agility.</p>	<p>Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes and cutlery.</p> <p>Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.</p>
	Expressive Arts & Design	<p>Explore, use and refine a variety of artistic effects to express their ideas and feelings.</p> <p>Return to and build on their previous learning, refining ideas and developing their ability to represent them.</p> <p>Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources and skills.</p>	<p>Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.</p> <p>Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.</p>
Geography	Understanding the World	<p>Draw information from a simple map.</p> <p>Recognise some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries.</p> <p>Explore the natural world around them.</p> <p>Recognise some environments that are different to the one in which they live.</p>	<p>Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

			Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons.
DT	Physical Development	<p>Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently.</p> <p>Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.</p>	Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes and cutlery.
	Expressive Arts & Design	<p>Explore, use and refine a variety of artistic effects to express their ideas and feelings.</p> <p>Return to and build on their previous learning, refining ideas and developing their ability to represent them.</p> <p>Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources and skills.</p>	<p>Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.</p> <p>Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.</p>
RE	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Think about the perspectives of others.	Show sensitivity to their own and others' needs.
	Understanding the World	<p>Talk about members of their immediate family and community.</p> <p>Name and describe people who are familiar to them.</p> <p>Understand that some places are special to members of their community.</p>	<p>Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society.</p> <p>Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.</p>

		Recognise that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways.	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.
History	Understanding the World	<p>Comment on images of familiar situations in the past.</p> <p>Compare and contrast characters from stories, including figures from the past.</p>	<p>Talk about the lives of people around them and their roles in society.</p> <p>Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.</p> <p>Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.</p>
Forest School	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.	<p>Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.</p> <p>Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.</p>
	Physical Development	Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Suggested tools: pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons.	Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes and cutlery.
	Communication & Language	<p>Learn new vocabulary.</p> <p>Use talk to help work out problems and organise thinking and activities, and to explain how things work and why they might happen.</p>	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.

			<p>Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.</p> <p>Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate</p>
	Understanding the World	<p>Explore the natural world around them.</p> <p>Describe what they see, hear and feel whilst outside.</p> <p>Understand the effect of changing seasons on the natural world around them.</p>	<p>Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.</p>