

# EYFS framework reforms: summary of changes

These changes will apply from 1 September 2021. Share this summary with your staff and discuss how these changes affect your pupils and school.

## Changes to ‘prime’ and ‘specific’ areas of learning

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated the definition of each prime and specific area of learning so that they’re **clearer** and **more specific**

AREA OF LEARNING	NEW DEFINITION	CURRENT DEFINITION*
Communication and language	The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children’s language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.	Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)	Children’s personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their	Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to

AREA OF LEARNING	NEW DEFINITION	CURRENT DEFINITION*
	<p>personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.</p>	<p>develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.</p>
Physical development	<p>Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.</p>	<p>Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.</p>
Literacy	<p>It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both</p>	<p>Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials</p>

AREA OF LEARNING	NEW DEFINITION	CURRENT DEFINITION*
	<p>reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).</p>	<p>(books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.</p>
<p>Mathematics</p>	<p>Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.</p>	<p>Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measure.</p>

AREA OF LEARNING	NEW DEFINITION	CURRENT DEFINITION*
Understanding the world	Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children’s personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children’s vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.	Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
Expressive arts and design	The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.	Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role play, and design and technology.

\*Under the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) framework](#), which you should use until the end of August 2021.

## Changes to early learning goals (ELGs)

PRIME AREA OF LEARNING	NEW ELGS	CURRENT ELGS	REASON FOR CHANGE
Communication and language	<p><b>Listening, attention and understanding</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Make comments about what they've heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding</li> <li>• Hold conversations when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers</li> </ul> <p><b>Speaking</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in small-group, class, and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary</li> <li>• Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<p><b>Listening and attention</b> Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen attentively in a range of situations</li> <li>• Listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events</li> <li>• Respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions</li> <li>• Give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity</li> </ul> <p><b>Understanding</b> Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow instructions involving several ideas or actions</li> <li>• Answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences, and in response to stories or events</li> </ul> <p><b>Speaking</b> Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs</li> <li>• Use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future</li> <li>• Develop their own narratives and</li> </ul>	<p>To focus on aspects which make a difference in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrowing language development gaps</li> <li>• Increasing overall attainment for all children</li> </ul> <p>There's also a stronger focus on teachers reading to children and developing and enriching children's vocabularies.</p> <p>This is based on evidence that a child's vocabulary at age 5 is one of the strongest predictors of future outcomes.</p>

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		<p>explanations by connecting ideas or events</p>	
<p>Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)</p>	<p><b>Self-regulation</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly</li> <li>• Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate</li> <li>• Give focused attention to what the teachers says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions</li> </ul> <p><b>Managing self</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge</li> <li>• Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly</li> <li>• Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices</li> </ul> <p><b>Building relationships</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Self-confidence and self-awareness</b> Children;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others</li> <li>• Are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities</li> <li>• Say when they do or don't need help</li> </ul> <p><b>Managing feelings and behavior</b> Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable</li> <li>• Work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules</li> <li>• Adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride</li> </ul> <p><b>Making relationships</b> Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play cooperatively, taking turns with others</li> <li>• Take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity</li> </ul> <p>Show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and</p>	<p>To add focus on self-regulation because self-regulation helps develop non-cognitive and cognitive skills.</p> <p>This is based on evidence that self-regulation is a predictor of pre-reading skills and later outcomes in maths and literacy.</p>

PRIME AREA OF LEARNING	NEW ELGS	CURRENT ELGS	REASON FOR CHANGE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers</li> </ul> Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs	other children	
PRIME AREA OF LEARNING	NEW ELGS	CURRENT ELGS	REASON FOR CHANGE
Physical development	<p><b>Gross motor skills</b></p> <p>Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others</li> <li>Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing</li> <li>Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing</li> </ul> <p><b>Fine motor skills</b></p> <p>Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases</li> <li>Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery</li> <li>Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moving and handling</b></p> <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show good control and coordination in large and small movements</li> <li>Move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space</li> <li>Handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing</li> </ul> <p><b>Health and self-care</b></p> <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe</li> <li>Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently</li> </ul>	<p>To include references to strength, because developing core strength and larger muscle groups provides a basis for developing fine motor skills.</p> <p>To move references to self-care under PSED.</p>
SPECIFIC AREA OF LEARNING	NEW ELGS	CURRENT ELGS	REASON FOR CHANGE
Literacy	<b>Comprehension</b>	<b>Reading</b>	To reflect the importance of phonics

PRIME AREA OF LEARNING	NEW ELGS	CURRENT ELGS	REASON FOR CHANGE
	<p>Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary</li> <li>• Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories</li> <li>• Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play</li> </ul> <p><b>Word reading</b></p> <p>Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs</li> <li>• Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending</li> <li>• Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>Children at the expected standard of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed</li> <li>• Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters</li> <li>• Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others</li> </ul>	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and understand simple sentences</li> <li>• Use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately</li> <li>• Read some common irregular words</li> <li>• Demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they've read</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds</li> <li>• Write some irregular common words</li> <li>• Write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible</li> </ul>	<p>and language comprehension.</p> <p>To reflect emphasis on developing a love of reading set out in the revised definition of the literacy area of learning.</p>

SPECIFIC AREA OF LEARNING	NEW ELGS	CURRENT ELGS	REASON FOR CHANGE
Mathematics	<p><b>Numbers</b></p> <p>Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a deep understanding of numbers to 10, including the composition of each number</li> <li>• Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <p><b>Numerical patterns</b></p> <p>Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system</li> <li>• Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity</li> <li>• Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally</li> </ul>	<p><b>Numbers</b></p> <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or less than a given number</li> <li>• Add and subtract 2 single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer using quantities or objects</li> <li>• Solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing</li> </ul> <p><b>Shape, space and measures</b></p> <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems</li> <li>• Recognise, create and describe patterns</li> <li>• Explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them</li> </ul>	<p>To refocus on developing greater depth of learning.</p> <p>‘Shape, space and measure’ is included in the revised definition of the mathematics area of learning, so has been removed from the ELGs.</p>
SPECIFIC AREA OF LEARNING	NEW ELGS	CURRENT ELGS	REASON FOR CHANGE
Understanding the world	<p><b>Past and present</b></p> <p>Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society</li> </ul>	<p><b>People and communities</b></p> <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about past and present events in their own lives and the lives of family members</li> </ul>	<p>Updated in response to feedback that these ELGs were vague.</p> <p>To support greater depth of</p>

PRIME AREA OF LEARNING	NEW ELGS	CURRENT ELGS	REASON FOR CHANGE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class</li> <li>• Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling</li> </ul> <p><b>People, culture and communities</b></p> <p>Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> <p><b>The natural world</b></p> <p>Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this</li> <li>• Know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions</li> </ul> <p><b>The world</b></p> <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things</li> <li>• Talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another</li> <li>• Make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes</li> </ul> <p><b>Technology</b></p> <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools</li> <li>• Select and use technology for particular purposes</li> </ul>	<p>understanding and wider vocabulary development.</p> <p>Technology has been removed because feedback from experts, framework pilots and primary assessment consultations shows this has little value as an end-point measure in itself.</p>

PRIME AREA OF LEARNING	NEW ELGS	CURRENT ELGS	REASON FOR CHANGE
	the seasons and changing states of matter		
Expressive arts and design	<p><b>Creating with materials</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function</li> <li>• Share their creations, explaining the process they have used</li> <li>• Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories</li> </ul> <p><b>Being imaginative and expressive</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher</li> <li>• Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs</li> <li>• Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music</li> </ul>	<p><b>Exploring and using media and materials</b> Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them</li> <li>• Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function</li> </ul> <p><b>Being imaginative</b> Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use what they have learned about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes</li> <li>• Represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories</li> </ul>	<p>Feedback showed that these ELGs needed to be clearer and more specific.</p> <p>To emphasise the importance of children being able to demonstrate imagination and creativity through a range of experiences and materials</p> <p>To reflect wider emphasis on language and vocabulary development (through focus on role play, making up stories and singing)</p>

## Changes to assessment and moderation

The DfE will get rid of:

- Local authority (LA) moderation for the EYFS profile
- The 'exceeding' judgement for ELGs

Instead of LA moderation, schools should continue to:

- Moderate internally
- Work with other schools to moderate

The DfE will support this by:

- Updating the ELGs (as above) to make it easier to make consistent judgements
- Providing updated exemplification materials

The DfE has also updated the non-statutory Development Matters curriculum [guidance](#) to reflect the new framework from September 2021.

## Minor change to safeguarding and welfare requirements

The DfE will include promotion of good oral health as part of the overall requirement to promote good health.

This is because research from Public Health England shows that 1 in 5 5-year-olds has experienced tooth decay.

It'll be up to your school or setting to determine how you'll meet the requirement (it won't require supervised tooth brushing and you won't need to assess this). It could mean things like talking to children about the effects of eating too many sweet things, or the importance of brushing your teeth.

If you want to introduce supervised tooth brushing, read [this guidance](#).