



REDBOURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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FAQ's For EYFS 2026-2027

Following our initial announcement regarding changes to our EYFS class structure for September 2026, several parents have requested further information. Below is the schools' response to the questions/queries which we have received. We hope that you find this useful and it clarifies the arrangements we have put in place. If you have a question not addressed in this FAQ, please email admin@redbournprimary.co.uk.

Staffing

As a minimum, each class (Willow and Lime) will have a full-time equivalent teacher. All teachers will continue to receive their entitled PPA time, which will be covered by known staff/sports coaches etc, to be confirmed in September in the termly Teacher Newsletter.

Each class will also have a full-time Early Years Practitioner (EYP). An additional EYP will support across both classes to help meet the needs of the children.

How will the daily structure work in mixed-age EYFS classes?

The daily routine will be carefully structured to meet the needs of both age groups. Children spend much of the day learning through play and continuous provision, alongside short adult-led activities tailored to their stage of development. Nursery children focus on communication, social skills, and exploration, with some early maths and phonics sessions.

Reception children will take part in more focused phonics, early reading, writing, and maths sessions. The children will come together for shared activities such as stories, singing, outdoor play, and circle times to help build a strong class community.

How will Reception children learn separately from the Nursery children, where appropriate?

There will be some separate adult-directed sessions for Nursery and Reception children. These will take the form of a carousel, ensuring that all children receive quality-first teaching from qualified teachers and Early Years Practitioners.

How much dedicated teaching time will Reception children receive each day?

Reception children will receive several short, focused adult-led teaching sessions throughout the day, usually totalling around 1.5–2.5 hours depending on the time of year and the needs of the cohort. This will be balanced carefully with high-quality continuous provision and play-based learning, which remains central to the EYFS curriculum.

How will the school ensure Reception children are sufficiently challenged academically and socially within mixed-age classes?

The Reception children will continue to access the full Reception curriculum and receive appropriately challenging teaching through focused adult-led sessions, small group work, and carefully planned continuous provision. Activities will be differentiated to meet children's individual stages of development, ensuring the children are supported to make strong progress in phonics, early reading, writing, maths, and independent learning. Socially, mixed-age classes can provide valuable opportunities for Reception children to develop confidence, leadership, communication, and independence as role models for younger children.

How will younger children who may not yet be ready to learn at the same pace be supported, whilst ensuring the older children's learning is not regularly affected?

Nursery and Reception children will be taught according to their individual stage of development rather than solely by age. Younger children who need additional support will benefit from carefully planned routines, targeted adult support, and play-based learning experiences that match their needs and level of readiness. At the same time, Reception children will continue to receive focused teaching and appropriately challenging activities through differentiated group work and adult-led sessions.

What evidence/examples can the school provide to demonstrate that this model will maintain educational standards?

Mixed Nursery/Reception classes are a well-established model used successfully in many schools and can provide strong outcomes when they are carefully planned and well-staffed. The school will continue to follow the EYFS framework and monitor children's progress closely through ongoing assessment, observations, and regular review of attainment and development. The school will evaluate the effectiveness of the mixed-age provision through pupil progress data, classroom observations, and feedback from staff and families to ensure educational standards remain high for all children.

How will Reception children be prepared for transition into Year 1?

Reception children will be carefully prepared for transition into Year 1 through gradually increasing independence, resilience, and readiness for more formal learning routines over the course of the year. As we ordinarily do, we will work closely with Year 1 staff to support a smooth transition through shared activities, classroom visits, and information sharing, ensuring children feel confident, secure, and well prepared for the next stage of learning.

What will happen in September 2027?

The Reception children will move into Year 1 and will be mixed to form Oak and Beech classes. The Nursery children will remain in EYFS and become Reception children.

What are the schools plans for this cohort's Reception children when they move into Year 1?

At this stage, no final decisions have been made. In a years' time when we start budget setting for the next financial year, we aim to make a decision and contact parents if the plan is anything other than two Year 1 classes (Oak and Beech).

Are financial considerations influencing these decisions?

Financial sustainability is a significant factor. School funding is based on an expected average of 30 pupils per class. In a years' time we want to be as close to this as possible. Since the 'Good' Ofsted in March 2025 and improved academic attainment, we have seen 14 in-year admissions join the school. We are focusing on increasing our numbers through marketing, and a stronger social media presence.

43 children in any year group may not be financially viable for two classes of 21/22 children. Two possible alternative options for consideration would include:

- Two single classes
or
- One Year X class and one Year X/Y class
or
- Two Year X/Y classes

In addition to this, we will endeavour to maximise income through school lettings and an increased number of children joining the school. We also hope to see a rise in income by increasing the number of children who attend:

- wraparound provision (RCC and EMC)
- school-run clubs
- PTA fundraising events

All additional income will support the strategic future planning.

What are the longer-term plans for the school?

Looking ahead, falling birth rates are already affecting application numbers across Hertfordshire, and Governors are considering longer-term strategies to ensure the school remains sustainable. As the birth rate is expected to continue declining, the Governors are considering starting the process to become a one form entry school in 2028/29, if needed.

If mixed-age classes are extended beyond EYFS, the curriculum will need to be adapted, likely through a two-year rolling programme to ensure full coverage.

What is the overall aim of these changes?

The overall aim is to balance a sustainable structure with the continued delivery of high-quality teaching and learning, ensuring that all children are supported and challenged appropriately.