



Prior Weston Primary School and Children's Centre

Teaching and Learning in the Foundation Stage Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy for the Foundation Stage		
	Name	Date
Head Teacher	Fiona Maccorquodale	November 2025
Completed by	Bev Newman	November 2025
Governing Body	Children, Curriculum and Standards	
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"Early childhood is an explosion of experience." Jenny Lendon

Teaching and Learning Policy for the Foundation Stage

This policy outlines the principles for good practice across the Foundation Stage. It uses the four guiding principles from the EYFS framework of every child is **a unique child**, children learn through **positive relationships**, children develop well in **enabling environments** and **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**. These principles will ensure a continuity of practice through the Foundation Stage that will enable all children to become competent and confident independent learners.

The Foundation Stage is a distinct phase in education. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is important in its own right as well as underpinning all future learning by supporting and fostering children's personal, social and emotional well being and establishing positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning.

"The greater the language children are exposed to the greater the learning capacity of the child."
Jan Dubiel

Our main aims for all children are:

- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum for every child to develop the building blocks for future learning
- To plan a curriculum that is relevant, fun and based on real experience
- To provide first hand experiences to put their learning into context
- To provide a safe and secure learning environment
- To develop confidence, independence and self esteem
- To encourage and motivate children to become independent learners
- To support children on the first steps of their learning journey
- To provide a range of learning opportunities such as solitary play, independent group play, adult supported play, adult directed learning and discrete teaching
- To develop social skills and relationships
- To reflect the diversity of social and cultural backgrounds in the class and wider school community
- To provide a free flow curriculum where learning happens inside and outside
- Take children interests and use them to plan relevant activities
- To provide children with a secure grounding in the core skills necessary for children to continue to be successful in the next stage of their education



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The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The curriculum is divided into seven areas of learning. These are the -

prime areas

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

specific areas

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

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Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- *every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured*
- *children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships*
- *children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.*
- *importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).*

(Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2020)



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The role of adults

In Babies, Toddlers and Nursery each child must be assigned a key person. Parents and/or carers must be informed of the name of that person, and explain their role, when a child starts. The key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The class teacher will support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

It is the role of all adults to support children's learning using a range of strategies. Adults are responsible for setting up a rich and stimulating learning environment that encourages independent play and investigation. The key person or class teacher will support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

Time needs to be given to allow children to explore the environment independently and learn at their own pace. Adults are also to use a range of teaching strategies such as supporting child initiated play, leading activities that have been planned from child interests and discrete teaching sessions. Adults need to plan for balance of these activities depending on the needs of the child. It is the role of all staff to ensure that the needs of all children are being met equally and that all children have an opportunity to take part in all activities. Adult led activities will become more frequent across the Foundation Stage as children progress with their learning.

When age appropriate there will be timetabled group or whole class sessions such as singing or story sessions. As children move through Nursery into Reception these sessions will also occur for maths, literacy and phonics. These will begin as short 15 minute sessions and will increase in length over the course of the year as is appropriate.

'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 ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning. As children grow older and move into the Reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for year 1.'

(Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2020)

Planning and Assessments

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. All adults are to make informal observations of children at work and play to contribute towards **formative assessments** for each child. These occur while the learning is happening and inform teaching in an ongoing basis. They



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are then used to plan for activities based on child interests. Practitioners are to use these formative assessments within their planning cycle. Practitioners use the Birth to Five Matters guidance to support with assessments.

There are 3 stages of planning that are the responsibility of the room lead or teacher.

- **Long term planning**- this is drawn up by the Foundation Stage team. These plans show curriculum coverage over all areas of learning during the Foundation Stage and show progress in the skills that are being learnt.
- **Medium term plans**- These cover a term or half term period and cover the skills, concepts and knowledge to be taught through a specific unit.
- **Short term plans**- These show on a daily/ weekly basis how skills have been broken down to a specific learning objective. They show how staff deployment and how a balance of teaching strategies is being delivered. The needs of specific groups or individuals may be highlighted on these plans.

Practitioners are to plan challenging tasks based on systematic and accurate assessments of children previous skills and needs. Plans are to be shared on a regular basis amongst the team with support staff being given the opportunity to plan their own sessions. Teams are required to meet at least once a week to discuss weekly plans and any changes that may be necessary. Planning needs to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the children.

Teachers are also expected to keep **summative assessments** on each child in the Foundation stage. Each child will have an on-entry assessment, this will be formed using the home visit, any stay and play sessions and the first six weeks of starting. Children in Reception will have the baseline assessment check within the official period. The children are then tracked termly on the school system. There are regular termly meetings with families to discuss their child's development against the expected ages and stages. There is an end of year report at the end of Nursery and Reception that is shared with the next teacher and the parents. There is also a transition meeting for each child between the teachers. All assessments are to be submitted to the Deputy Head and Early Years lead at the end of each assessment cycle.

When making all judgments practitioners should consider **The Characteristics of Effective Learning** for each child and how these influence how the child learns. These are:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

At the end of Reception the Foundation Stage Profile is submitted for each child using the statutory early Learning Goals. An end of year report is shared with the year one teacher and the parents. There is also a transition meeting between the Reception and Year One teachers.



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Assessments that are reported:

Progress check at 2. When a child is aged between two and three, practitioners must review their progress and provide parents and/ or carers with a short summary of their child's development in the prime areas. This progress check must identify the child's strengths and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners should develop a targeted inform planning to support the child's future learning and development involving parents and/or carers and other professionals (for example, the provider's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) or health professionals) as appropriate.

Assessment at the start of the Reception year – the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts Reception.

Assessment at the end of the EYFS – the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). The Profile must be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with SEND must be made as appropriate. Early years providers must report EYFS Profile results to local authorities, upon request.

Enabling Environments

Children learn through having an interesting, stimulating and a safe environment and the time with which to explore it. A well set up learning environment is a powerful additional teacher. There are three aspects of the learning environment. These are the emotional environment, the indoor environment and the outdoor environment. All are to be equally valued and planned for by staff. A wide range of independent play opportunities need to be provided through stimulating and well-resourced areas such as:

- sand
- water
- role play areas
- writing and mark making areas
- maths area
- book area
- music
- small world play
- construction



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Areas need to set up with a clear purpose for learning. Children need to have as much access to the outdoor classroom as possible with a free flow approach operating. All rooms in the Foundation stage have access to their own outdoor areas that are resourced for their own specific use. There needs to be a match in the learning opportunities between inside and outside provision.

Displays need to promote, support and reflect children's current interests and learning. There needs to be a balance between self initiated and adult led learning on display and all displays need to be changed half termly to maintain interest and celebrate children's learning.

Parents as partners in learning

In the Foundation stage to achieve smooth transitions between home and school a series of visits are planned for both the child and parents. These involve the child and parents coming for stay and play sessions in the setting, the parent coming for a welcome meeting with members of the Foundation Stage team and a home visit by the setting staff. All of these are intended to make both the child and the parent feel as confident as possible when they start. In Reception new children to the school are either visited at home or in their current setting by the Reception Class teacher and invited to visit the Reception Class in school.

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning. They are welcomed into the classrooms at the start of the day between 8:45 and 9:00 and time is given to build relationships with parents at this time. If a parent wishes to discuss a particular issue with a member of staff this is not dealt with in class time. They can make an appointment before or after school, whenever the member of staff is able to offer.

Parents are encouraged to share information about their child. This is gathered through informal discussions that may be recorded as part of the child's formative assessment and home- school forms that parents are asked to fill out. Translations into home languages will be offered when available.

Information is regularly given **via Tapestry**, letters and school emails. There are parent meetings and workshops to explain ways that parents can support learning at home. Parents will also get information on their child through parent teacher meetings each term and an end of year report.

Staff training and development

All staff in the Foundation Stage have access to training through the professional development and training offered via the school. This occurs through whole school training sessions, phase meetings and individual observations and written feedback. External training programmes will be offered when appropriate to an individuals training needs and in line with the school development plan.