The Gates Primary School Westhoughton

EYFS Policy
September 2026
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The Gates EYFS Policy

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right." Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, Department for Education 2021

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1. Aims and Intent

1.1 Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the wide range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

1.2 Intent Statement

At The Gates Primary School, we provide our children with a curriculum that is designed to be flexible, engaging and exciting so that their unique needs, passions and interests are embraced. Every child is unique individual and we celebrate and respect our differences within the school community. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge and values that equips our children for their future successes. We inspire our children to become accomplished, happy individuals, ready to reach their full potential in an ever-changing world.

Our EYFS curriculum recognises children's prior learning and various starting points, and creates a holistic curriculum that maximises cross-curricular links and builds strong foundations for their future. We enable children to succeed through cooperative and collaborative learning principles. As such, there is a strong emphasis on the Prime Areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language, including oracy. At The Gates Primary School, we recognise that oracy not only improves academic outcomes, but is a life skill to ensure success beyond school, in life and future employment. Oracy develops children's thinking and understanding, which in turn promotes self-

confidence, resilience and empathy which support the child's well-being. Enabling, high quality and warm environments, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration right from the start. We believe that high level engagement ensures high level attainment. We therefore provide an engaging curriculum that maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences, as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking.
By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2026.
(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2)

3. Structure of the EYFS

At The Gates, our Early Years Provision consists of a Nursery class offering 26 places, staffed by one teacher and 1 level 3 Assistant teacher and a Reception class with 30 places staffed by a teacher and assistant teacher.
Nursery and Reception have 2 separate classrooms connected by a small room so children can mix, there is also a large outdoor classroom that both Reception and Nursery have access to.

Nursery children can choose from am, pm or full day sessions and opens from 8.40 until 3.20 each day.

4. Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2025.
Progression documents have been developed following the guidance provided to outline the skills the children will develop throughout their Early Years Journey.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The **prime areas** are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Characteristic of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' which help practitioners identify a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- Playing and Exploring- children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
- Active Learning- children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties, they enjoy achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

4.1 Planning

The EYFS at The Gates provides a happy, safe, caring, stimulating and well-organised environment in which children learn by building upon what they already know and can do. Staff at The Gates look carefully at the children in their care, consider their needs, their interests and their stages of development and use all of this information to help plan a challenging and enjoyable experience across all areas of Learning and Development.

In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Our outdoor provision mirrors the opportunities available to the children inside offering a mix of adult-led and child-initiated learning.

For Nursery aged children**,** discrete, differentiated Phonics and Mathematics activities are taught daily in groups. Adults used objective led planning to focus learning on specific next steps based on gaps in learning. The adult's main role is to model, demonstrate and question what a child is doing and facilitate their learning taking it to the next level and accelerating progress.

Reception children are taught phonics, literacy and maths discretely though a range of adult directed and child led activities. Allowing them to develop the skills and foundations to be built on in Key Stage 1.

5. Assessment

At The Gates, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA, September 2025).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development (Early Learning Goals)
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

Ongoing assessment (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff undertake a variety of assessment methods throughout the child's time in EYFS; they include child initiated tasks and teacher led activities in the inside and outside learning environments. Observations, samples of work and photographs will be recorded in each child's online 'learning journey'. Practitioner assessment is moderated informally through daily discussions, and more formally at half termly moderation meetings.

EYFS data is collated by class teachers to determine if children are on track or not on track to meet the Early Learning Goals. This data is analysed by the Early Years Lead to identify gaps and plan next steps. EYFS profile Data is submitted to the Local Authority at the end of the Year.

6. Working with parents

Key to ensuring high quality early years experience is to ensure continuity between all settings and to ensure that the children's social, emotional and educational needs are addressed appropriately. At The Gates, transition is seen as a process, not as an event and is planned for and discussed with parents, children and practitioners of the pre-school settings that the children of The Gates attend, when required.

We recognise that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators and that when parents and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning.

We encourage parent partnership through:

- Showing respect and understanding for the role of the parent in the child's education
- Listening to accounts of their child's development and any concerns they may have
- Making parents feel welcome by being friendly, approachable and having an open door policy
- Maintaining an on-going dialogue
- A Parent/Carer information evening is held each year for prospective parents. The purpose of this meeting is, in part, to disseminate important information, to encourage discussion and to emphasise the vital importance of home-school cooperation and mutual support.
- Parents/Carers will be invited to Curriculum Evenings and stay and learn workshops throughout the schools year to find out how phonics, reading, writing, number skills and other curriculum areas are taught and how to support at home.
- Through the use of Seesaw, an online learning journal which parents can access at home
- Parent use Seesaw to share their weekly reading with school, Seesaw is also used to share wow moments from home and also challenges completed from the homework topic webs that are sent out termly. Staff then comment on these post to strengthen the home school link.

- Helpful Handy Hints are included in the Home School pack to support the parental role in early learning is given to all parents prior to their child's entry to the school.
- Virtual and in person stay and play sessions will be provided for the parents and children where staff will share activities, modelling ways in which parents can support their children at home. School will provide resources for parents so this can be more easily achieved at home.
- Two parents' evenings are held in Autumn and Summer term. Additionally, staff are happy to meet with parents/carers on an informal basis before or after school or by appointment if necessary.
- Observations made of children are shared with parents at the time, this helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

7. Parent Communication

We value open and positive communication with families and use clear systems to keep parents informed; all formal communication from the school is shared via the school office through MCAS, while updates on children's learning and progress are shared through Seesaw and at Parents' Evenings. We recognise that starting school is a big change for a child and parents alike. As a busy school, there is a very limited capacity for teachers to respond to any requests for updates or phone calls during the school day. Please be assured that we will be in contact if we believe there is a problem. Any unreasonable and/or persistent requests for updates or calls from the teacher will be referred to the school's Leadership Team to arrange a meeting with you. For nursery children, this may result in the withdrawal of a place in the school.

8. Health, Safety, Safeguarding and Wellbeing

"The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework recognises that children learn and develop well when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have strong, positive relationships with the adults caring for them." — *EYFS statutory framework (England)* (DfE).

EYFS follows the same whole school procedures for Child Protection (see policy). All accidents are taken seriously and logged. In the case of a major accident a phone call home is also made. We have a qualified Paediatric First Aider at all times who responds to First Aid accidents. Our Outdoor Area is regularly inspected by the Site Manager, fire drills and invacuations are held inline with whole school policy. Staff do not use their personal devices such as mobile phones or other handsets in the classroom. Photographs are taken on school iPad's only to support regular observation and assessment and are sometimes uploaded on the blog. Permissions are sought as part of the starter packs. Children are encouraged to start without nappies but for children who still require support, an Intimate Care Plan is put into place to support the process and agreed and signed by parents and carers. For any toileting accidents children are supported and changed in the class toilets and a letter is sent home to make parents and carers aware and this is also logged in the office. Only prescribed medicine can be administered and this is stored with signed documentation in the Teacher Cupboard in the classroom.

In line with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework effective from September 2025, our setting is committed to implementing the updated food and nutrition guidance. This includes ensuring that all snacks and drinks provided are healthy, balanced, and nutritious. A paediatric first aid-trained member of staff will be present whenever children are eating. We will gather and regularly update information on each child's dietary needs, allergies, and preferences, and ensure that all staff are aware of and adhere to these requirements. Allergy action plans will be developed in

consultation with parents and healthcare professionals where necessary. Food preparation will follow safety guidelines to minimise choking risks, and children will be seated appropriately and supervised closely during mealtimes. We will also promote a calm, distraction-free eating environment and support children in developing positive attitudes towards food and healthy eating habits.

8.1 Safer Sleeping and Rest

At The Gates Primary School, we recognise that children aged 3–5 may occasionally require a period of rest or sleep during the school day. Although sleep is not a routine part of our Nursery or Reception provision, we will respond sensitively to individual children's needs and ensure that any child who requires sleep or rest is cared for safely.

Where a child falls asleep or requires a period of rest:

Staff will ensure that the child is in a safe, suitable and comfortable area where they can rest undisturbed.
Children will be appropriately supervised while sleeping or resting and will remain within the sight and hearing of staff.
Staff will make regular checks on a sleeping child to ensure that they are safe and comfortable and are not becoming too hot or cold.
Children will not be left sleeping in an inappropriate position or location, such as on soft furnishings, beanbags or cushions where this may present a risk.
Staff will consider the individual child's needs, including any relevant medical, health or developmental information shared by parents/carers.
Parents/carers will be informed if their child regularly falls asleep during the school day or if staff have any concerns about their child's sleep or wellbeing.
Any individual arrangements required for a child who regularly needs to sleep or rest will be discussed with parents/carers and appropriately risk assessed.

As our provision is for children aged 3–5 years, the setting does not routinely provide sleep provision for babies or children under two. However, where a child does require sleep or rest, staff will follow the relevant safer-sleep principles within the EYFS statutory framework and current Department for Education guidance.

8.2 Safer Eating, Food and Nutrition

At The Gates Primary School, we recognise the importance of healthy eating and safe mealtimes in supporting children's health, development and wellbeing. As an Early Years setting for children aged 3–5, we follow the Department for Education's **Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance** and ensure that food and drink provided to children is healthy, balanced and nutritious.

- **Fresh drinking water** is available and accessible to children throughout the school day.
- Snacks and drinks provided by school are selected in line with healthy eating guidance and children's individual dietary needs.
- Children are appropriately **seated and supervised** whenever they are eating or drinking.
- A member of staff with a **valid paediatric first aid certificate** will be present in the room whenever children are eating.

- Food will be prepared and presented appropriately to **reduce the risk of choking**, taking account of children's age, developmental stage and individual needs.
- Information about children's **dietary requirements, food allergies, intolerances, preferences and relevant health needs** will be obtained before they start at the setting and kept up to date.
- Relevant allergy and dietary information will be clearly communicated to all staff responsible for the child.
- Staff will follow the school's procedures for managing allergies and responding to allergic reactions.
- Children will be encouraged to develop **positive attitudes towards food, healthy eating and independence** at mealtimes.
- Mealtimes and snack times will provide opportunities for children to develop social skills, communication and independence in a calm and positive environment.
- Where parents/carers provide food for their child, they will be given appropriate information about the school's expectations regarding healthy eating, allergies and food safety.

The school's food and nutrition arrangements will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect current EYFS requirements and Department for Education guidance.

8.3 Screen Use and Digital Technology

At The Gates Primary School, we recognise that digital technology can support children's learning and development when it is used purposefully and appropriately. As an Early Years setting for children aged 3–5, we ensure that screen use complements rather than replaces children's opportunities for play, physical activity, outdoor learning, communication, social interaction and high-quality adult interaction.

Screen use is limited, purposeful and linked to an identified learning or developmental purpose. Where screens are used, staff provide appropriate adult supervision and interaction, ensuring that children remain actively engaged rather than passively viewing content.

Our approach to screen use follows current Department for Education guidance. Further information regarding the appropriate use, duration and management of screens within Nursery and Reception is outlined in the school's EYFS Screen Time Policy, which should be read alongside this policy.