



The Gateway Primary Academy

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

2025 - 2026

"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. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DFE (Department for Education) 2021

Written by: Rachael Rafter (EYFS lead)

Date shared with governors:

Date of review: June 2025

Signed by chair of governors:

This policy will be reviewed in line with new local and national initiatives.

Introduction to Early Years Foundation Stage

At The Gateway Primary Academy, we recognise that early childhood is the foundation on which children build on for the rest of their lives. We greatly value the significant role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe early childhood is valid, as part of life. We recognise it is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception year. We recognise that all children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Reception to take on the task of building upon their first learning experiences. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents, carers, support staff and the Foundation Stage teachers work together effectively to support children's learning and development.

Aims/Curriculum Intent

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At The Gateway, the overarching aim of our EYFS is to help young children achieve these five "Every Child Matters" outcomes.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that celebrates children's individuality and prepares them for a full, successful, and happy life. Through our safe, positive, and nurturing EYFS environment our children become confident, enthusiastic, and independent learners and achieve well in our EYFS. Through an effective balance between child led and adult led learning allows the children to flourish

and become confident and creative learners with the necessary skills, dispositions, and attitudes to successfully continue their learning journey into Year 1 and beyond.

We aim to:

- Ensure all pupils achieve well through **a love of learning and develop an understanding of the world around them** through a play-based and practical approach.
- Promote **a community ethos** which supports **self-worth, value, and respect for others**.
- Nurture an attitude of **self-belief** and **confidence** as individuals
- Develop an understanding **that positive risk taking, and self-evaluation** is an essential stepping-stone in successful learning
- Provide a **welcoming environment** that is safe, secure, happy, and stimulating
- Work together to meet the needs of each individual through **inclusive practices**
- Maximise learning opportunities through **partnership with parents and the wider community**
- Extend the awareness of **individual's rights and responsibilities** as members of a **multi-cultural society and global community**

Learning and Development

The Early Learning Goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the Reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" document (Department for Education, 2024).

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

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

Additionally, there are four specific areas of learning:

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

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is through the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

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

Planning

"Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development."

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DFE 2024

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied, and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, to understand and consider their current interests, development, and learning. All practitioners who work in Early Years at The Gateway are involved in this process. There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six half-terms and the steps leading towards the Early Learning Goals are distributed over the terms, to determine broad and balanced coverage.

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

"In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately" Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DFE 2024

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment. At The Gateway Primary Academy, we follow the Early Learning Goals within the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and additional statements set out in the "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage" (Department for Education, 2024) when planning. This document supports the implementation of the statutory requirements for the EYFS.

Staffing and Organisation

At The Gateway Primary Academy, there is one Reception class with a maximum intake of 30 children. Our Reception class has one teacher and two full time teaching assistants. The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classroom and in the EYFS outdoor area. This time is supported by an adult, who acts as a facilitator to the child's learning. The teacher liaises with the teaching assistants, regularly involving them in planning, preparation, and assessment. We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so all practitioners are

encouraged to participate in local authority courses and projects, such as the ECERs project. Practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas, and teaching methods to colleagues.

Assessment, Recording and Monitoring

At The Gateway Primary Academy, we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

Formative Assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests, and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, September baseline assessment, other focused assessments. Each child's information is stored in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile folder and there is also a class book to demonstrate whole class learning.

Summative Assessment

The EYFS Profile summarises all the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against the Early Learning Goals. It is completed on-entry (baseline assessment) and at the end of each term by the class teacher. The teacher also undertakes in-house and local cluster group moderation. Teaching and learning in Literacy and Mathematics is monitored by whole-school work sampling. Other areas of learning and development in the foundation stage are monitored during EYFS/KS1 meetings. The subject leaders (English and Maths) work alongside the EYFS leader to analyse data. This information is then fed back to head teacher, who oversees the achievement of different groups within the foundation stage.

Learning Through Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development." (Early Years Foundation Stage), Department for Children, Schools, and Families, 2007

At The Gateway Primary Academy, we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves.

The Learning Environment

"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.." Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DFE 2024

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming, and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom during child-initiated play.

At The Gateway, we believe in the importance of children learning through role play. This increases their communication skills, play skills and understanding of the world around them. "The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development." (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DFE 2024.) As such our EYFS classroom is heavily influenced by our role play area. Our reading, writing and maths are incorporated within the role play area. We also have music, sand, and water areas for our reception children to access. The outside learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play 'home' kitchen, sand area, 'quiet' den, climbing frame, wheeled toys, water, growing, music, and construction areas, with opportunities for literacy and maths interwoven throughout. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

In July, all parents/carers are invited to attend a meeting with the Head teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, EYFS leader, Reception teacher and the class-based teaching assistants. During this meeting they receive The Gateway Primary Academy Reception information booklet and other necessary information. To prepare the children for the transition the children will meet their new teacher and spend sessions in their new classroom. They will also be invited to attend 2 story times before their class-based visits. The children will also be given an 'All About Me' book to fill in over the summer holidays that staff can use as a prompt to initiate discussions with the children. Children who are not as confident are identified and supported by the EYFS adults in September during the transition from their nursery into our Reception Class. During the first 3 weeks in September all parents are invited to a short meeting with the class teacher to discuss reception at The Gateway and any needs/interests their child has.

Transition from Reception to Year 1

To prepare the children for the transition the Reception staff talk positively and enthusiastically about what it is like in Year 1. The children will meet their new teacher and spend a session in their new classroom. As our reception children use the same playground as KS1 they are already familiar with and already know the year 1 children well. They will continue to attend whole school assemblies. During the autumn term the school day has a similar structure to that which has already been experienced in Reception and children will have access to an outside area. Where possible, the year 1 children will continue to enjoy practical learning experiences which gradually becomes more formalised towards the

end of the academic year. The 'Supersonic Phonic Friends' Systematic Synthetic Phonics scheme is continued throughout year 1.

Some children transitioning into Year 1 will need additional support which may involve them visiting the Year 1 classroom at different times of the day during the summer term. They will also have access to a social story created by the SENCo and teaching staff. In some cases, parents will be invited into the Year 1 classroom to outline how the classroom is organised and what can be put into place to help with the transition process.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in Early Years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge, and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the curriculum to Parents/carers during the parents meeting in the summer term, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- sending information home regularly through our home learning logs to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum topic and activities.
- during Reception home learning will be set termly (See home learning policy)
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby Parents/carers can discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- sharing progress through regular meetings
- encouraging Parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.
- encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home e.g.,-library books, and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- discussing individual targets with Parents/carers at parents' evening in October and March (informed by the EYFS Profile)
- providing a written report to Parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and Development Matters statements.

Equal Opportunities

At The Gateway Primary Academy, we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and

use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. For further information see 'Equal Opportunities Policy.'

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special medical needs. Personalised plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's **Special Educational Needs Policy**. The class teacher will discuss these targets with the child and his/her Parents/carers. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term. The school's SEN (Special Educational Needs) co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. *For further information see Special Educational Needs Policy.*

Safeguarding

Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy.

Health and Safety

Please refer to 'Health and Safety' Policy with specific reference being made to Risk Assessment and Medical needs (First Aid Training). Additional reference should also be made to the EYFS Risk Assessment. A member of the EYFS team must be paediatric first aid trained. Molly Cleary is currently the paediatric first aider in the EYFS at The Gateway.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher and EYFS leader, and will be reviewed on an annual basis