





Gateway Primary School Policy Cover Sheet

Policy Name:	Early Years Foundation Stage
Adopted at / by:	FGB
Signed on behalf of the Governing Board	
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Date:	September 2025
Signed on behalf of Headteacher:	
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Date:	September 2025
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At Gateway Primary School we believe that 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.

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

At Gateway Primary School children are typically admitted to EYFS in the September following their fourth birthday. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Gateway Primary School we value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Gateway Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress from their starting point to achieve their potential.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;

- It provides a rich and stimulating environment; with a unit based approach to teaching and learning.
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four principles -

A Unique Child

At Gateway Primary School we recognise that every child has the potential to be a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Gateway Primary School are treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage.

We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy or other outside agencies) as necessary.

- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At Gateway Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through -

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our open afternoons and induction meetings.
- Arranging, where possible, visits or telephone conversations by the Early Years Senior teacher with keyworkers for each child in their preschool setting.
- Providing a selection of information leaflets about commencing EYFS at Gateway Primary School, this includes photographs of the learning environment, a letter from the class teacher and photos of the staff.
- Inviting children into school to meet their teacher and spend time in the unit before starting school. (More sessions will be arranged if deemed necessary as a result of preschool visits or conversations with parents). This will be a combination of visits with a familiar adult, and an opportunity to explore the unit independently, whilst spending time getting to know other children and the adults.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if EYFS staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents /carers to discuss with them. This communication will come via the teachers within the unit.
- Written contact through school newsletters, Parent Hub and Class Dojo.
- Sending home 'WOW' slips, 'Busy Bees' or 'Proud Clouds' designed to enable parents to record outstanding achievements at home.
- Publishing information about life in the EYFS, including events, diary dates and topic information on the school newsletter and Class Dojo.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Sharing the children's 'Busy Book' with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in EYFS. This will include attainment and an overview of the child's learning.
- Asking parents to sign permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.

- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as sharing assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers and Forest School sessions.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, to encourage specific collaboration between child, school and parents e.g. Christmas events, Stay and play afternoons and themed events.

The Foundation Stage team consists of 2 full time) class teachers who are identified as the key workers for the children in their class.

There will be a team approach to teaching, where all adults work with all the children and will build strong relationships with everyone. The EYFS teachers will be supported by at least 2 full-time teaching assistants. These adults work across the unit and are not assigned to specific children or classes.

Teachers non-contact time will be covered by a Higher Level Teaching Assistant, supported by the teaching assistants. Planning is provided by the Class Teacher. It is expected that all staff in the Foundation Stage develop good relationships with all children, across both classes, interacting positively with them, taking time to get to know them and supporting each of them with their learning,.

Enabling Environments

At Gateway Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Play-based learning is paramount, and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. We plan a learning environment that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

We work as one large unit in one large open plan space.

Within the inside space of the unit there will be a shared writing area, a shared book area, a shared maths area, a shared art area and shared role play provision. There will also be planned opportunities for topic learning, small world and imaginative play, story telling and the development of fine motor skills.

Within the outside space the children will have opportunities to focus on mathematics, literacy, gross motor skills and a range of other learning.

Learning and Developing

The EYFS Curriculum

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early year's settings. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across several learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. These areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Specific Areas:

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

All Staff will support all children in each of the seven areas of learning, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

All children participate in regular phonics sessions and participate in regular number sessions.

To support our Phonics and Writing we use Bug Club, this is used in class to support our teaching and is closely matched to our reading scheme. All children have access to the online platform for reading e-books. These books provide variety to reading opportunities. We will have a fidelity to this scheme of work and the resources provided. As soon as the children are able to blend their first set of 6 sounds they will be issued with a phonics based reading book. Parents are expected to participate in a reading based activity with their children at least 5 times each week. It is expected that children have a bookbag in school every day.

Phonics sessions will be taught at an appropriate level to meet the needs of the children, this could be in groups of children from across the unit. Number may be taught in a similar way.

Taught sessions and carpet sessions will be a mix of whole class sessions, mixed group sessions or whole phase sessions.

Children's development levels are assessed throughout the year through formative assessment using practitioners professional judgement and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning: In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Assessment

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of both formal and informal observations and through teachers' professional judgements within planned and incidental activities. Whilst there is no requirement to collect evidence for assessment, a portfolio of children's work is collated into their Busy Book which acts as a record of their year in the EYFS. Assessment is completed regularly, in line with the whole school assessment schedule and involves all of the teachers and other adults, as appropriate.

On-going formative assessment is completed, using the non-statutory guidance, Development Matters. This formative assessment is used to inform future teaching.

Within the unit each child will have a Busy Book, where a collection of their learning will be collated in chronological order. This may include child's work, short observations and annotated photographs. Each child will have a writing book for guided writing.

The statutory framework as published in 2021 states that assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence.

Busy Books will contain a sample of learning that will be shared with parents at each parental consultation meeting. We use SONAR (an online tracking system) to monitor attainment and progress, in line with the school policy. The tracking is based upon the revised Development Matters guidance published in 2021.

The collection of assessment data at the end of the Foundation Stage is a statutory requirement. A measure of a Good Level of Development (GLD) is used to assess whether children have met the expected level of attainment at the end of the EYFS. Children who are at the expected level will have achieved an expected judgement in each of the prime areas as well as all early learning goals for literacy and mathematics.

Children who have not met the expected standard will be recorded as emerging. This information will be shared with parents and with Year 1 teachers.

In line with the UK Government's introduction of the Statutory Baseline for Reception aged children in September 2021, all children will complete the assessment during their first 6 weeks of school. This will be completed with the class teacher and in a fun way. The scoring for this assessment will not be made available to parents, although some narrative statements are available following the assessment upon request. The summary report of the Reception Baseline Assessment is placed into the child's Busy book.

Class teachers will use information provided by parents as part of the induction pack and initial assessments of the children within the setting to determine next steps for each child.

Parents receive an annual written report that offers comments about the child's learning alongside a summary of attainment against each of the Early Learning goals. During the Summer term all children will be assessed as either at the expected level or as emerging.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage area is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. Children have access to both inside and outside areas across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor space area.

Within the EYFS unit there will be one large shared writing area, a shared art area, a shared book area, a shared maths area and a shared role play area. These are accessible to all the children during the day. There will also be opportunities to develop fine motor skills, construction, small world toys, storytelling, topic-based learning, cooking, and science. Each activity is planned to meet the needs and next steps of the children.

In the outside space there will be opportunities to explore each of the areas of learning, through accessing our maths shed, writing shed, large climbing frame, nature area, water exploration, our large mud kitchen, large construction and physical activities. Activities will be planned to make links to topic-based learning, prior learning and next steps.

Within the inside and outside provision there will be opportunities planned for the children to apply and rehearse their prior skills and learning and to demonstrate their skills.

We are also a Forest School. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and in different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active.

All areas of the curriculum can be explored both inside and outside.

The children will participate in a taught PE session weekly. This is intended to develop self help skills and independence as well as providing opportunities to

develop gross motor skills. All children are expected to have a full indoor PE kit in line with our whole school uniform requirements for these sessions.

Within the unit there are shared displays and opportunities for the children to display their work that they are proud of. This promotes self esteem and gives the children opportunities to recognise and celebrate their own achievements.

At Gateway Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and subsequent updated versions.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence
- To promote good health including Oral Health, Gateway Primary School EYFS teachers are both Oral Health Champions.
- To manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs. Behaviour will be promoted using the whole school aeroplane system. This will be explained to the children and will be used consistently.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- To ensure all children are carefully supervised by a paediatric first aider whilst eating.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (Safeguarding Children Policy). All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the opportunity to have milk. They always have access to water. We do not allow children to bring sweets into school for celebrations. It is expected that all children bring a water bottle into school each day.

Intimate Care

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children can carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing

underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

Occasional 'accidents' will be dealt with by staff, who will feedback to parents at the end of the day. Parents will be expected to provide a change of clothes for emergency use.

More regular 'accidents' will require a meeting between parents and the class teacher to agree a course of action. In the majority of cases (unless due to a medical condition) it is expected that children are dry throughout the day and able to manage their own hygiene prior to starting school.

It is good practise for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring high levels of intimate care. We have an Intimate Care policy that is shared with the parents of children who may need this support.

Appendix A – The Unit



Book Area

This area will contain – examples of some of the stories that the children have heard in class.

A selection of familiar texts, e.g Julia Donaldson and popular authors

Multiple copies of some texts

Books that are linked to the phonics learning and decodable texts

Some topic related books

A collection of non fiction texts and number books

Books linked to the childrens learning

All reading scheme books will be located in this area.



Storage Area

All children will have one peg which will be labelled for them

Children will store spare clothes and coats here.



Fine Motor Skills

This area will contain – playdough, cutters, trays, rolling pins

Tweezers and beans, buttons and small objects to collect

Threading

Colanders and spaghetti

Pasta for threading

Small manipulatives to develop hand strength



The Creative Area (Snip and Stick)

This area will contain – (over time)
A range of painting materials, big brushes, sponges, small brushes, cotton buds

A range of wax crayons and pencils of varying thickness.

Chalks

Child appropriate scissors (left and right handed)

Glue, PVA and glue stick, masking tape and cellophane.

A range of collage materials

A selection of papers of varying sizes for the children to access independently.



The Maths Area

This area will contain –

A selection of maths manipulatives (fish, dinosaurs etc) which are accessible to the children

Balance scales

Pegs and pattern boards

2D and 3D shapes

Numicon pieces

Dominos and other maths related games

A selection of number related books

Activities planned for the maths area of continuous provision will promote and develop the skills accessed during taught sessions.





Small World Provision

This area will be used to promote language and communication skills.

Activities will be changed regularly with additional enhancements being added. Where possible books will be added to the provision to extend ideas or link learning.

Visuals and word prompts could be added e.g alongside the farm there could be photographs of animals with text on to promote reading



Story Telling

The development of story language is promoted through the puppet theatre.

A range of puppets of varying styles is accessible across the day.

Where possible puppets will be added linking to stories we have heard or people we are learning about in class.

Using Drawing Club children will develop story language and an understanding of story structure. These adult led sessions evolve over time leading from being story tellers to writing our own stories as authors.



Writing

This area is a designated storage area for resources within the unit. Writing should be encouraged everywhere in the unit. All children will be encouraged to write their name on everything they produce.

The storage area will include –

Pencils and other writing implements

Phoneme mats – linked to taught phase of phonics

Whiteboards and pens

Notebooks

Envelopes

A large selection of paper , cards and envelopes

Letter flips, magnetic letters, letter fans and phonics games to play.

Around each teaching space there will be a phoneme freeze displaying the sounds in the order they have or will be taught and a tricky word display.

Each child will have access to a name card to help them develop the skills to write their name with increasing independence.

Children have exposure to the alphabet during each phonics session.



Role Play

This provision will evolve as the children become more confident.

Initially a 'home corner' where the children explore their familiar spaces together, this area will evolve to develop opportunities for exploring other learning in areas such as shops, restaurants, dentists, doctor surgeries, schools, castles, vets and even space.

Where possible this area will be developed to extend vocabulary with visuals and 'real life' resources.



Understanding the World

This area may contain –
Magnets, globes, magnifying glasses, identification charts, skeletons and bodies, teeth and brushing, life cycles, sensory exploration and play, natural resources and real life handling experiences .



Construction

The construction area enable children to develop their imagination, design skills, story telling and fine motor skills.

Where possible inspiration will be provided via story books and photographs to provide stimulus.

Resources in this area will demonstrate a progression from earlier stages of the academic year moving towards smaller toys that require greater dexterity.

Displays

Within the unit, displays will reflect the children's learning. There will be a mix of photographs, teacher written speech bubbles and children's work.

Every child will have their own designated 'MY SPACE' patch where they are invited to display and celebrate their proudest achievements.

There will be a designated pencil control/name writing/portrait drawing display which will evolve over the year, demonstrating progress and skill

There will be unit Calendar board – this will reflect 12 months of the school year and will feature key events to look forward to, birthdays and special events in our learning.

In the unit there will be a display Time to Talk learning- based around the whole school Commando Joes approach and a space will be allocated for 'proud clouds and WOWS' from home.