



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Reviewed on	Aug 26	Review frequency	2 years
Next review due	Aug 27	Template Yes / No	Yes
Owner	Claire Palmer	Approved by	Executive



1. History of Policy Changes

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change
30.7.26	1	Claire Harvey changed to Claire Palmer	Change of name through marriage.
30.7.26	4	Section 3 Caveat added	all EYFS Statutory updates take precedence
30.7.26	7	Section 7 – additional statements around importance of communication and language, literacy and mathematics. Reference to school curriculum moved from teaching section to curriculum.	Strong foundations in the first years of school - GOV.UK
30.7.26	10	Section 10 renamed Inclusion and belonging (previously SEND) and new opening paragraph added. Information from Section 17 (further information / Equalities) moved into this section and rephrased	Following direction under inclusion and belonging
30.7.26	11	References to statutory guidance around attendance added.	EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers
30.7.26	12	Section 14, list of all sections in safeguarding section of EYFS statutory has been removed. A statement on safer sleeping and links to food safety and children's screen use has been added	EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers Help for early years providers : Screen use

2. Contents

1. History of Policy Changes	2
2. Contents	3
3. Introduction	4
4. Definitions	5
5. Aims.....	5
6. The Early Years Foundation Stage	5
7. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework and Curriculum	7
8. Planning, Teaching, Learning and Play	9
9. Assessments and Record Keeping.....	9
10. Inclusion and belonging	11
11. Partnerships with Parents (this includes carers and important key adults in a child's life)	11
12. Attendance	12
13. Effective transition to Nursery / Reception / Year 1.....	12
14. Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements	12
15. Context and Organisation	13
16. Monitoring and Review.....	13
17. Link to other HET policies	14



Sam's Entitlement

3. Introduction

"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported."

pg 8 [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)

This policy has been developed in line with the current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework and should be interpreted and implemented accordingly. It should be read alongside any subsequent updates, revisions, or amendments to statutory guidance. Schools and practitioners are responsible for ensuring compliance with the most up-to-date statutory requirements, which will take precedence over this policy where applicable.

4. Definitions

- EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage
- ELG – Early Learning Goals

5. Aims

At **XXX school**, we wish to promote the love of learning and aim to provide the highest quality care and education, where children feel secure, welcomed, and valued within our happy and caring school. We deliver an Early Years curriculum that educates the whole child so that they are lifelong learners. Our purpose is to ensure that every child gets the best possible start in life and receives the appropriate support to secure foundational knowledge, fulfil their full potential and maximise their life chances. No child should feel excluded or disadvantaged. We achieve this by ensuring our Early Years provision is a place where children's uniqueness is valued. Children feel safe, supported and nurtured, and where partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals are active and highly valued.

We believe that:

- Children need security, love, friendship, encouragement, motivation, stimulation, praise, and consideration for their individuality.
- The whole child is important – social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and moral developments are interrelated and valued.
- In the Early Years, children learn best through first-hand experience and need a stimulating environment to help develop lively, imaginative, enquiring minds.
- Children learn naturally through play. It is a process through which children explore, investigate, recreate, and come to understand their world.
- Our provision promotes high standards and expectations, learning and skills, positive attitudes, and enjoyment through **school values etc.**
- Children should be allowed to develop knowledge, confidence, self-esteem, independence, self-discipline, individuality, responsibility, perseverance, co-operation, and social awareness to achieve their potential.
- Children benefit from positive partnerships between home and school. Mutual respect and dialogue will ease the transition from home to school and support children's future learning.
- Effective Early Years are always ambitious to be better.

6. The Early Years Foundation Stage

Gatcombe Park Primary School follows the EYFS Statutory Framework (DFE, 2026) [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) and is supported by the non-statutory curriculum guidance set out in Development Matters (DFE, 2023) [Development Matters - GOV.UK](#) and Birth to 5 Matters (Early Education updated 2026) [Birth-to-5-Matters-Doc-Artwork-PT-LINKS-Aug-26.pdf](#). This is planned and delivered by committed practitioners who fully understand the curriculum requirements. Four guiding principles shape practice in Early Years and are reflected in Sam's entitlement, detailed at the start of this policy. At Gatcombe Park Primary School they are:

Unique Child + Positive Relationships + Enabling Environment = Learning & Development



Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured, which in school looks like:

- Recognition that the child comes first
- Support and challenge for all children
- Making personal choices in their learning journey
- School values / ethos

Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. In school this is seen through:

- Informative meetings with parents, carers before school begins and throughout the year
- Parent contributions to a child's learning journey are valued
- Parents evening and school reports
- Information evenings to support home learning / understanding of Gatcombe Park Primary School
- An open-door policy
- Working with other professionals and experts beyond school
- Highly trained staff trained in all aspects of the new EYFS framework, including the safeguarding requirements, ensuring that all adults know how to keep children safe and to recognise and report concerns.

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. This is demonstrated with:

- A high-quality well planned learning environment both indoors and outside to stimulate, support and challenge children whilst keeping them safe
- Children are actively encouraged to explore the world around them developing their creativity, independence, thinking skills and ability to solve problems across the curriculum
- A rich variety of stimulating, high quality resources inside and out
- Resources used aim to stimulate, challenge and inspire children to engage in learning and provide for both the planned and unplanned curriculum
- Clear, accessible well organised learning areas that promote independence and exploration
- Exciting, enriching and educational opportunities within the EYFS base
- Outdoor area with areas of the curriculum available each day, and an opportunity to play and run in a large space
- Adults who are skilled at supporting, challenging and extending the learning and development of each child
- Areas to encourage and support independent skills, curious thinking and perseverance.
- All areas being valued by adults and used for learning

The importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. We place a high value on structured and unstructured play. Throughout the day adults provide opportunities for learning in a variety of styles that include

- Active and engaging learning topics, including current interests of the children
- Carefully planned activities
- Supportive adults who can meet the needs of each child
- Enriching resources available
- Hearing, valuing and responding to each child's voice
- Learning through the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning
- Providing a wide range of experiences, knowledge and opportunities that broaden children's understanding of the world and support future learning and life chances, exposing children to "cultural capital" to increase the chance of social mobility.



7. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework and Curriculum

Our children follow a broad and balanced curriculum with the EYFS Framework underpinning all practice. The EYFS has seven areas of learning and development which are set out into Prime and Specific areas. The three Prime areas all closely link with one another and are central to all the other areas of learning and development. They represent the earliest stages of development and are critical for influencing later successes in life. It is essential for children to acquire these skills by the age of 5 as they become more difficult to acquire later and may hold a child back in other areas of development.

Prime Areas of Development

Communication and Language	• Listening, attention and understanding • Speaking
Physical Development	• Gross motor skills • Fine motor skills
Personal Social and Emotional	• Self-regulation • Managing self • Building relationships

Specific Areas of Development

Literacy	• Comprehension • Word reading • Writing
Mathematics	• Number • Numerical patterns
Understanding the World	• Past and present • People, culture and communities • The natural world
Expressive Arts and Design	• Creating with materials • Being imaginative and expressive

These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others. All areas of learning and development are closely interlinked.

This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make links between what they are learning. As effective Early Years practitioners, we plan a broad and balanced range of activities based on the needs of the children in our school. We plan a yearly progression of knowledge and skills which provides opportunities for children to retrieve and recall previously taught knowledge and skills. We deliver these skills through a coherent and sequentially designed curriculum based on the children's needs and interests. Whilst we know children learn best when they are following their interests, we also know that it is our responsibility to expose them to ideas and concepts beyond their comfort zone. We therefore plan learning opportunities that broaden and enrich the children's beliefs and experiences. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child-initiated activities both indoors and outdoors. Educational trips and visits from members of our community are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom. 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' guidance material is used to support our planning and assessments of children's next steps. When planning and facilitating these activities we reflect on the different ways they learn and support children in using the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These demonstrate the learning skills a child needs to develop to become a successful learner.

Characteristics of Effective Learning Skills being developed



Playing and Exploring	Engagement: Finding out, having a go, being willing, connecting known ideas, pretending & taking a risk
Active Learning	Motivation: Concentration, focus, persistence, enjoyment, effort, attention to detail, satisfaction in reaching goals
Creating and thinking critically	Thinking: Problem solving, creating own ideas, planning, selecting resources equipment, adapting & reviewing

We also recognise the importance of Executive Function which contributes to a child's growing ability to self-regulate. Executive function includes the child's ability to:

- hold information in mind
- focus their attention
- think flexibly
- inhibit impulsive behaviour.

These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate:

- concentrate their thinking
- plan what to do next
- monitor what they are doing and adapt
- regulate strong feelings
- be patient for what they want
- bounce back when things get difficult.

Communication and Language development is central to self-regulation and is at the heart of our curriculum and underpins children's learning across all areas of development. We provide a language-rich environment where high-quality interactions, meaningful conversations, storytelling, singing, rhymes and imaginative play are valued and celebrated. Practitioners carefully model and extend children's language, introducing new vocabulary and supporting children to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings with increasing confidence.

We recognise that strong communication and language skills are fundamental to children's future success. Through purposeful teaching, attentive listening and responsive interactions, we develop children's speaking and listening skills, attention, understanding and vocabulary. We provide opportunities for children to engage in discussion, ask questions, share experiences and build the language they need to learn, communicate effectively and make sense of the world around them.

Early reading is a priority within our curriculum. Children are immersed in a language-rich environment where stories, rhyme, conversation and vocabulary development are valued. Systematic synthetic phonics is taught daily and children are provided with regular opportunities to apply their developing knowledge in reading and writing.

Writing is developed through a balance of carefully planned teaching, meaningful real-life opportunities and child-initiated learning. Adults model the writing process and provide appropriate support to develop children's confidence, stamina and independence as writers. Handwriting is taught progressively through a carefully sequenced approach. Children develop the gross and fine motor skills necessary for writing before being taught correct letter formation. Staff model consistent handwriting expectations and provide regular opportunities for children to practise and apply these skills. We aim for all children to develop a comfortable pencil grip, good posture, increasing control and fluency, and pride in the presentation of their work.

Early mathematics is carefully planned and sequenced to develop secure number sense, mathematical language and confidence in problem solving. Children are provided with meaningful opportunities to explore, reason and apply mathematical concepts throughout the environment and daily routines.



For further details on our curriculum please refer to school website / Reception Curriculum design document

8. Planning, Teaching, Learning and Play

At Gatcombe Park Primary School, we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible, and our Foundation Stage has an ethos of learning through play.

“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 and learning that is guided by adults.” 1.16 [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#). “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 Key Stage 1.” 1.17 [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)

Play is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. It is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child and occurs both inside and outside. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with time to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences. They support children to discover, explore, investigate and develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity. Play can also help them to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. The types of play offered will be appropriate to the individual children’s needs and include:

- play which is child led
- play which is sensitively supported and extended by adults
- play which is guided towards specific educational outcomes.

Whilst we value learning through play and see the impact of purposeful intervention through this, we recognise that there are some knowledge and skills that need to be explicitly planned, taught and rehearsed. This will be delivered through a balance of groupings to include whole class, small collaborative groups, peer partner, individual, attainment and mixed attainment as appropriate.

9. Assessments and Record Keeping

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of our EYFS. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children’s learning and individual needs. There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child’s development to inform their next steps. Assessment in Reception is carried out in line with the Early years foundation stage profile: [Early years foundation stage profile handbook - GOV.UK](#)

Baseline assessments are carried out during the first half of the Autumn Term / When a child starts – including Nursery / Preschool. Evidence is gathered through practitioners’ observations of children whilst engaged in their self-initiated activities, as well as planned opportunities. Transfer information from pre-schools, nurseries and parent contributions also support practitioners in making on entry assessments. In addition to establishing our own school baseline assessment, staff will also administer the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) [2026 reception baseline assessment: assessment and reporting arrangements \(ARA\) - GOV.UK](#)

DCPro is used to track and monitor pupils’ summative progress from their entry to school and is updated termly, judging whether pupils are ‘on track’ or ‘off track’ in their development of the three Prime Areas, Literacy and Mathematical Development. Gradings are



- on track secure to meet ELG
- on track minus should meet ELG, gentle guiding
- off track plus could meet ELG with strong and targeted support
- off track minus very unlikely to meet ELG

The Early Years Leader and Head Teacher closely track all key groups through the year, including gender, FSM, PPG, EAL, SEND, and summer born pupils. Gaps in learning are identified and made a priority, by adapting planning and, if appropriate, setting up interventions. Pupils who are assessed as not secure to meet ELG are monitored closely. Pupil progress reviews are undertaken termly with the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher and the SENCO, and appropriate interventions and changes to provision are agreed to help close gaps in pupil development.

When a child is aged between 2 and 3, in accordance with the statutory framework we must review their progress and write a short summary of the child's development in the Prime areas. This is called Progress Check at age 2. This assessment will require discussions with health professionals if required. [Progress check at age two – Non-statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage](#)

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 ('expected')
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The Profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents / carers. If a child has met "expected" for all 7 Prime ELGs and the 5 ELGs for Literacy and Mathematics, it is reported that they have met the "Good Level of Development" for starting in Year 1. The results of the EYFS Profile are shared with parents / carers for their child with a brief report that illustrates each child's strengths / next steps. EYFS Profile data is submitted to the local authority.

The EYFS Profile is moderated to ensure consistent assessment judgements. This is completed internally and in partnership with trust schools and other local schools. In addition, teachers moderate with Year 1 teachers to support a smooth transition into Year 1. Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the EYFS Profile, which supports the professional dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers. This will include information about each child's stage of development and learning needs, for example level of dictation required to support writing, and assists with the planning of an effective curriculum in Year 1. [Help for early years providers : EYFS profile assessment support](#)

Assessment in EYFS is observation based. Staff monitor children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. Children's interests are 'in the moment' and need to be responded to there and then to gain the full value of the child's curiosity, understanding and engagement at the time. At Gatcombe Park Primary School, we work towards this by ensuring there is sufficient time in the day for the adults to work alongside the children in their Discovery time, when they are initiating their own learning. We believe the most important role of the adult is to interact with the children and respond to their emerging needs and interests. Staff capture 'milestone moments' where children have demonstrated a skill or knowledge that is significant to them and their learning journey. These moments may be captured in the form of a 'bubble up'. Learning Journals are used to collect observations along with samples of children's independent work. Children's workbooks also provide evidence for assessment. We use these observations to support our developing knowledge of individual children. They inform us of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified, and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Learning and assessments are captured in a variety of ways including;

- maths books



- writing books
- learning journals
- work books
- floor books
- ongoing assessments
- contextual information form completed on entry
- phonics tracking system and book bandings
- focused / group / assessment / planning

10. Inclusion and belonging

At Gatcombe Park Primary School, we are committed to providing an inclusive environment where every child feels safe, valued and able to thrive. We recognise that children develop and learn at different rates and that some children may require additional support to access learning and achieve their potential. High-quality inclusive practice is embedded throughout our provision.

Assessments consider contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of need is crucial to enable practitioners to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage, and the schools Inclusion Leader is consulted for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's policy for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion.

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. We believe that every child should have equitable access to learning opportunities and be treated with dignity and respect.

Our curriculum reflects and celebrates the diverse backgrounds, experiences and cultures represented within our school community and wider society. We actively challenge discrimination and stereotypes and promote positive attitudes towards difference.

We work to ensure all children can participate fully in school life regardless of their:

- ethnicity, culture, religion or belief
- disability or additional needs
- sex or gender
- family circumstances
- language background
- socio-economic circumstances

11. Partnerships with Parents (this includes carers and important key adults in a child's life)

At Gatcombe Park Primary School, we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role in educating the children. We acknowledge that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We feel it is important to listen to parents and value all they have to say regarding their child. All information is sought sensitively, parents reassured as to its confidentiality.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate. In Reception classes this key adult is the teacher.

Ways in which we support and promote home learning are



- Parent workshops to help understand expectations for their child and how they can support learning at home
- Parental feedback opportunities
- Celebration events in school, end of topic, assemblies.
- gathering info on child prior to starting school,
- involvement in transition events
- attending curriculum workshops
- Ways parents can share home learning
- How do school keep parents up to date – letters / newsletters / topic / curriculum grids – updates on website

12. Attendance

Gatcombe Park Primary School are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance. Gatcombe Park Primary School follow the statutory guidance around actions to take if a child is absent without notifications or for a prolonged period of time. 3.11 and 3.12 [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#). The whole community-pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play.

13. Effective transition to Nursery / Reception / Year 1

We highly value the need for a child's transitional journey to be smooth, supported, gradual and individualised. Transition processes involve the family and start before children enter our School through to the transition into Reception and then year 1. They include:

- new parent meetings sharing the uniqueness of child, this will include capturing any allergies and health information
- parent welcome meetings
- stay and play sessions
- staff visits to home /preschools / nurseries
- settings transfer documents
- involving health and other professionals if appropriate / beneficial
- staggered starts

To Year 1

- Reception to Year 1 transition meetings
- discussion around judgments made in the EYFS Profile
- Year 1 teachers spending time in the EYFS to observe and engage with children in their known space
- children having time in the year 1 base prior to the summer holiday

14. Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

We follow all safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in section 3 of the [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#). Our school maintains robust policies, procedures and training arrangements to ensure that children remain safe, healthy and well supported. [Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#)



We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks such as Health and Safety monitors completing risk assessment sheets for indoor / outdoor play, along with an understanding of carrying scissors appropriately, sun safety and Stranger Danger. We follow set procedures when children become ill or have an accident and promote the good health of our children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of fruit snacks, drinking water always being available and have regard to [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#) and [Help for early years providers : Food safety](#) to support safer eating along with nutrition guidance. We capture any allergies and how this will be handled with parents prior to the child starting school. Within school we have adults who hold Paediatric First aid qualification and are always available when children are present, including on outings. 1 adults in the EYFS base are qualified. There is always a qualified paediatric first aid member of staff with the children when eating.

We have regard to the updated guidance for children's screen use in the Early Years section 3.94 [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#). Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class iPads are used to photograph children (for Tapestry observations and assessment purposes) and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs.

15. Context and Organisation

At Gatcombe Park Primary School, Early Years provision is delivered through **one Reception class**. The class is led by a **full-time qualified teacher**, who is responsible for planning, teaching, assessment, and ensuring high-quality learning opportunities across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum.

The Reception class is supported by a **full-time Learning Support Assistant (LSA)** who works alongside the class teacher to provide high-quality provision, facilitate learning through play, support children's individual needs, and promote their personal, social, and emotional development.

The Early Years provision is overseen by the **EYFS Leader**, who monitors the quality of education, curriculum implementation, assessment, and children's progress, ensuring that all pupils receive the best possible start to their education.

Adults work collaboratively to create a nurturing, inclusive, and stimulating learning environment where children feel safe, valued, and confident to explore, investigate, and develop independence. Staffing arrangements enable meaningful interactions, targeted support, and responsive teaching that meets the needs of all learners.

The organisation of the school day balances adult-directed teaching, group work, continuous provision, and child-initiated learning opportunities. As children grow in confidence and independence throughout the year, routines and expectations are adapted to prepare them effectively for the transition into Key Stage 1, whilst maintaining the play-based, developmentally appropriate principles of the EYFS.

16. Monitoring and Review

The Early Years Leader, in partnership with senior leaders, is responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.



Monitoring activities may include:

- lesson visits
- learning environment reviews
- assessment and data analysis
- moderation activities
- pupil voice
- parent feedback
- professional dialogue
- review of provision and outcomes

The Early Years Leader works in collaboration with subject leaders to ensure that progression and provision is clear across each subject area and keeps staff up to date of any changes to Early Years legislation and guidance.

The Headteacher and Deputy, Governors, and staff will review this policy in line with the date, and Government changes.

17. Link to other HET policies

Behaviour policy

Complaints policy

Equality and Diversity

Health and safety policy

Intimate care policy

IT policy

Safeguarding and Child protection policy