



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Reviewed on	Sept 25	Review frequency	2 years
Next review due	Sept 27		

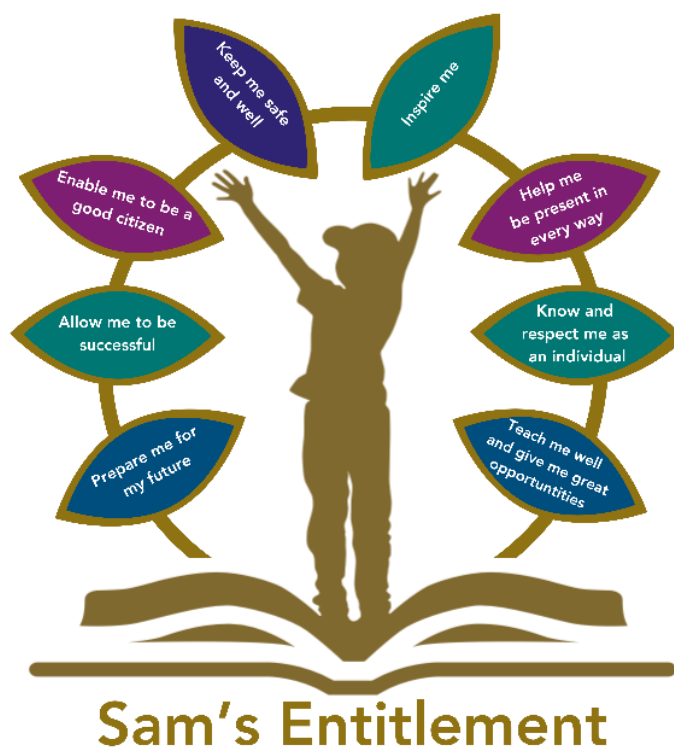


**1. History of Policy Changes**

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### 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.”

Early years foundation stage statutory framework page 7 – DfE effective 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

### 4. Definitions

- ‘Manager’ in this policy, is anyone as identified in the staffing structure with line management responsibilities.

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

## 5. Aims

At Gatcombe Park, we wish to promote the love of learning and aim to provide the highest quality care and education, where children feel secure, welcome, 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 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 our school values – aiming high.
- 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

Teaching in the EYFS at Gatcombe Park follows the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (DFE, 2025) [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 2021) [Birthto5Matters-download.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 and this is how they look at Gatcombe Park.

### 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
- 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 our school values.
- 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 (many children joining our school live in flats and do not have regular access to a garden or outdoor 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 are 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 are active, engaging and fun
- Exciting 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
- 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening, attention and understanding</li> <li>• Speaking</li> </ul>
Physical Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gross motor skills</li> <li>• Fine motor skills</li> </ul>
Personal Social and Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-regulation</li> <li>• Managing self</li> <li>• Building relationships</li> </ul>

### Specific Areas of Development

Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehension</li> <li>• Word reading</li> <li>• Writing</li> </ul>
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number</li> <li>• Numerical patterns</li> </ul>
Understanding the World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past and present</li> <li>• People, culture and communities</li> <li>• The natural world</li> </ul>
Expressive Arts and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating with materials</li> <li>• Being imaginative and expressive</li> </ul>

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 setting. 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	<b>Engagement:</b> Finding out, having a go, being willing, connecting known ideas, pretending & taking a risk
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Active Learning	<b>Motivation:</b> Concentration, focus, persistence, enjoyment, effort, attention to detail, satisfaction in reaching goals
Creating and thinking critically	<b>Thinking:</b> 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.

Language development is central to self-regulation. Children use language to guide their actions and plans. Play gives many opportunities for children to focus their thinking, persist and plan.

## 8. Planning, Teaching, Learning and Play

At Gatcombe Park, 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.”

“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.”

Early years foundation stage statutory framework pg 16 & 17 – DfE effective 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

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.

For further details on our curriculum please refer to our school website.

## 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](#).

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 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) [2025 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 age 2. This assessment will require discussions with health professionals if required.

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 written reports that illustrates each child's strengths and their next steps. EYFS 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 dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

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, we work towards this by ensuring there is sufficient time in the day for the adults to work alongside the children during 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 key 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 Tapestry observation. Electronic 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.

- Tapestry observations using photos, videos and anecdotal notes.
- writing books
- learning journals
- ongoing assessments
- contextual information form completed on entry
- Phonics tracking system and book bandings
- Focused / group / assessment / planning (OLP)

## 10. Special Educational Needs

All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. 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 special needs 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. See Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policies and also Intimate Care Policy.

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

At Gatcombe Park, 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, themed days etc.
- School Readiness meetings
- gathering info on child prior to starting school,
- involvement in transition events
- Ways parents can share home learning
- Tapestry notes and observations
- Newsletters, shared articles/ information for home learning.
- Topics overviews, knowledge organisers on the school website.

## 12. Attendance

Gatcombe Park 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.

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 through to the transition into Reception. They include:

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

To Year 1

- 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



We celebrate our strong links with feeder preschools and engage in termly networks / cluster groups with local providers to support a cohesive transition and shared set of stories / rhymes / songs that children are exposed to prior to starting school to provide familiarity and reassurance in a new setting.

#### 14. Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

We follow the Statutory Welfare Requirements [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#) that focus on Safeguarding & promoting children's welfare; Child protection, Suitable people, Staff qualifications, training, support and skills, Paediatric first aid, Key person, Staff: child ratios, Health including food and drink, Supporting and understanding behaviour, Special educational needs, Safety and suitability of premises, Environment and equipment, Information and record keeping. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. All staff adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy.

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 & 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](#). We capture any allergies and how this will be handled with parents prior to the child starting school. Within school we have a number of adults who hold Paediatric First aid qualification and are always available when children are present, including on outings. There is always qualified paediatric first aid member of staff with the children when eating. From September 2025 we follow the new guidelines to support safer eating along with nutrition guidance. [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)

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. Monitoring and Review

"This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Early Years leader and the application will be monitored by the headteacher and Governors".

This is a working document which we hope gives an insight into the day-to-day workings of the Early Years Foundation Stage at school and the rationale upon which they are based.

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 EYFS provision will be monitored by the Headteacher / Deputy / Assistant Head, EYFS Leader, teachers with subject responsibility.

And will involve data analysis, action planning, team meetings, work scrutiny, moderation, lesson observations, CPD

The Policy will be adapted and amended in the light of experience and the needs of the children entering school. We seek to ensure a smooth transition from home to school and a sound foundation for their learning.



The Headteacher and Deputy, Governors, and staff will review this policy in line with the date, usually every other year unless there are Government changes.

### **Little Wandle/ Phonics**

At Gatcombe Park we deliver our phonics teaching using the Little Wandle programme. This involves daily teaching of key skills to promote phonological awareness and early reading. Phonics teaching begins in Autumn 1 straight away and is continued throughout the Foundation stage and into Key Stage 1.

### **Home Learning**

At Gatcombe Park Park, we understand the impact of high quality liason between home and school and strive to ensure that our children learn at every opportunity. We believe that the provision of home learning is vital to their success.

We regularly send home activities and ideas for children to practise key skills through our online platform Tapestry. As part of our phonics provision, we also send worksheets, word cards and formation practice sheets. There is lots of emphasis on practising reading skills and regular reading is an expectation.

## **16. Further information**

### **Equal Opportunities**

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Act which came into force in April 2011, updated Dec 2023 has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

All members of our school community are of equal value regardless of:

- their ethnicity, culture, religion, nationality
- whether or not they are disabled
- their gender or gender identity
- their sexual identity
- We recognise and respect difference at Gatcombe Park. Our curriculum aims to foster an appreciation of each other's cultures and beliefs along

## **17. Link to other HET policies**

Behaviour policy

Complaints policy

Health and safety policy

Intimate care policy

Safeguarding and Child protection policy



