



TWHF First STEPS

Starting Together - Early Profile Snapshot

Inspiring *lives* | with greater **opportunity** and **choice**

Introduction

TWHF First STEPS is our trust-wide approach to understanding each child's unique starting point as they enter the Early Years. It is rooted in our belief that children thrive when they feel known, safe, and understood, and that high-quality provision begins with a deep knowledge of the child.

First STEPS is a carefully considered collection of information gathered through meaningful interactions, observation, play, conversation, and partnership with families and nurseries. It supports practitioners to build an accurate, holistic picture of each child so that provision, teaching, and support can be responsive from the very beginning.

What does First STEPS mean?

First STEPS represents our commitment to:

- Starting together with children and families
- Valuing relationships, belonging and wellbeing first
- Understanding the whole child, not just isolated skills
- Using starting points to shape provision, teaching and learning

Why is First STEPS important?

Establishing clear, meaningful starting points allows us to:

- Design provision that meets children where they are, not where we expect them to be
- Identify early strengths and needs so support can be timely and preventative
- Ensure children with communication, physical, emotional or SEND needs are supported swiftly
- Build strong relationships with families based on trust and shared understanding

By investing time at the start, we are better placed to ensure equity for all learners, particularly our youngest and most vulnerable.

Transition into Reception

The TWHF First STEPS approach helps children experience a confident, supported transition into Reception by ensuring they feel known, understood and secure from the very beginning.

TWHF First STEPS forms part of our wider trust-wide approach to **supporting a smooth transition into Reception**, aligned with the Department for Education guidance *Getting children ready for reception: supporting effective transition* (DfE, 2026):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/getting-children-ready-for-reception-supporting-effective-transition/supporting-a-smooth-transition-into-reception>

The DfE guidance makes clear that effective transition:

- Begins early and continues beyond the first day of school
- Is rooted in strong, trusting relationships with families
- Is strengthened through close partnership with early years settings
- Prioritises children's wellbeing, belonging, communication and emotional security

The TWHF First STEPS approach supports this by building a shared understanding of each child before they start school, ensuring continuity between home, nursery and Reception and reducing the need for children to “start again” on entry.

Transition into Reception is not a one-off event or baseline assessment. It is an ongoing, relational process that begins prior to entry and continues to inform provision, routines and support throughout the early weeks and first term in Reception. Information is gathered through home visits or in-school meetings with parents and carers, nursery and early years setting visits, professional dialogue and observation of children in familiar, low-pressure contexts through play, talk and everyday routines.

Families are central to the transition process. The First STEPS approach values parents and carers as experts in their child and prioritises trust, communication and reassurance.

To support families further, schools provide:

- Kindred Squared “Starting Reception” materials, offering consistent, practical guidance for parents and carers: <https://startingreception.co.uk/>
- A **Nursery Rhyme resource**, supporting shared language, rhythm, memory and confidence
- Opportunities for face-to-face one on one discussion and shared understanding of each individual child
- Opportunities for stay and play sessions, family picnics and other quality ‘getting to know you’ enhancements.
- Transition parent meetings

The First STEPS approach also values the professional expertise of nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. Information is shared **collaboratively**, supporting continuity in learning, routines and relationships, and enabling early identification of strengths and emerging needs.

The principles outlined above are enacted through the TWHF First STEPS approach, with transition information and evidence collated within Section 1: Belonging & Personal Development.



How We Build Understanding of Each Child

Information is gathered while practitioners are:

- Playing alongside children
- Talking and listening
- Reading stories
- Exploring environments
- Supporting routines
- Building trust and connection
- Listening to parents and previous settings

First STEPS is a practical expression of our TWHF EYFS Core Commitments:

- A nurturing, inclusive environment with a strong sense of belonging
- Exceptional teaching, high-quality CPD and meaningful interactions
- Oracy and language-rich environments
- Immersive literacy and numeracy through books, rhymes and storytelling
- Child-centred, play-based learning
- Equity for all groups of learners
- Strong foundations for personal development and behaviour
- Positive partnerships with parents and carers

Alignment with Ofsted Expectations

First STEPS directly supports Ofsted's expectations within the EYFS and Primary Inspection Framework, particularly around:

- Knowing children well and understanding their starting points
- Using assessment information to inform curriculum and provision
- Ensuring teaching builds progressively from what children already know and can do
- Prioritising language, communication, and personal development
- Identifying and supporting SEND early

Alignment with DfE EYFS Guidance

First STEPS is underpinned by the Statutory EYFS Framework and Development Matters, which emphasise that:

- Children develop at different rates
- Practitioners must understand starting points to plan effectively
- Observation and interaction are the most powerful assessment tools
- Assessment should be ongoing, formative, and integral to teaching
- Strong communication and language foundations are critical to later success

First STEPS supports this by capturing starting points across communication, physical development, personal development, literacy and mathematics.

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SECTION 1: Belonging & Personal Development Profile

- Family context & home information
- Home visit observations
- Nursery visit observations
- Emotional wellbeing & regulation
- Social interaction & play
- Independence skills

SECTION 2: Communication, Language & Oracy

- WellComm screening
- Sentence-level speech check
- Listening to a story / joining in
- Nursery rhyme participation
- Name recognition & letter identification

SECTION 3: Physical Development (Fine & Gross Motor)

- Pencil grip photo & assessment
- Posture & core strength
- Crossing the midline
- Drawing a self-portrait
- Scissor skills
- Gross motor screening

SECTION 4: Early Literacy Skills

- Name writing sample
- Early mark-making (child-initiated)
- Handwriting readiness

SECTION 5: Early Mathematics Skills

- Subitising dice assessment
- ChIPs / ECMG indicators
- Early number foundations

