

# GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

September 2025

Review: September 2026

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

## Vision

*Rooted in faith, growing in wisdom, branching into the world*

We are a diverse, vibrant learning community where everyone is welcomed, valued and encouraged. Loving relationships, rooted in the teachings of Jesus, allow children and adults to flourish together, creating wise, compassionate, respectful individuals who are ready to confidently take a productive place in an ever changing world.

## Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

## Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

### A unique child.

We recognise that every child is 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 and develop a positive attitude to learning.

### Positive relationships.

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

### Enabling environments.

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations, we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

### Learning and development

The Early Years classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There is continuous access to both the inside and outside learning environment. Both areas are organised to encourage children to be independent learners.

## Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic wellbeing. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young

children achieve these five outcomes. 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. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

- At Guston Primary School, we aim to:
  - 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.
  - 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.

### **Learning and Developing**

The EYFS Curriculum – Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals linked to the Statutory Framework for EYFS (2024)

#### **The prime areas are**

- Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- Physical Development – Moving and Handling and Self-care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness the specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

#### **The specific areas are:**

- Literacy – Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Mathematics- number and numerical pattern
- Understanding the World – People and communities, the world and Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Reception teacher plans activities within the Reception classroom with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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.

### **Play**

Learning through play is an important part of our Reception classroom. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in

which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play.

### **Teaching**

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The Early Years team respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

### **Assessment**

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline test. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. Due to the unique context of the school, pupils are also assessed using language link.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage

We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

Sonar is updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development within the Development Matters age-bands.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information with parents in the end-of-year report.

### **Developing positive relationship with parents**

At Guston 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 offer translation services where needed. Parents as Partners - We recognise that parents/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 meet the teacher afternoon

- Arranging, where possible, visits by the teacher to all children in their home setting prior to their starting school.
- Providing a handbook of information about commencing Reception at Guston
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Inviting children to spend time in Reception Class for three induction visits before starting school.
- 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 Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through the school newsletters.
- Publishing a Curriculum topic map detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the term as well as a class newsletter
- Sharing regularly the children's 'Learning Journey' with parents
- 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 reception.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc

### **Safeguarding & Welfare**

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.' (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Guston 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 2017.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence
- Promote good health
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- 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

### **Good Health**

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times.

## **Early Learning Goals (ELG)**

### **Communication and Language**

#### ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

#### ELG: Speaking

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

#### ELG: Self-Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly.
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

#### ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

#### ELG: Building Relationships

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others.

- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers.
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

## **Physical Development**

### ELG: Gross Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others.
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing.
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

### ELG: Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery.
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

## **Literacy**

### ELG: Comprehension

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

### ELG: Word Reading

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

### ELG: Writing

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

## **Mathematics**

### ELG: Number

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Have a deep understanding of numbers to 10, including the composition of each number.

- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5.
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

#### ELG: Numerical Patterns

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system.
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

### **Understanding the World**

#### ELG: Past and Present

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society.
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

#### ELG: People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

#### ELG: The Natural World

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

### **Expressive Arts and Design**

#### ELG: Creating with Materials

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher.
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs.
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music