

Early Years Policy



Preston Grange Primary School

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Next review due: April 2026

Aim

We recognise that Early Years is a very distinctive phase of education which integrates the care and education of our youngest learners. We aim to provide highly effective teaching and learning opportunities within a culture of challenge, nurture and support. We support all children to progress to be the best they can be. Our curriculum enables as many children as possible to achieve a Good Level of Development by the end of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and we build on this in subsequent years.

Our Offer

Our Early Years offer is outlined below:

- 15 hours of universal Nursery provision delivered over 5 mornings and staffed by 1 teacher (EYSENDCo) and 1 HLTA.
- An additional 15 hours of Nursery provision (section 28) to complete our 30 hour offer delivered over 4 afternoons (Monday to Thursday) and staffed by 1 HLTA and 1 level 3 Teaching Assistant
- Full time Reception class staffed by 1 teacher (EYFS Lead) and 1 Level 3 Teaching Assistant
- We also have an additional Early Years Teaching Assistant working across Nursery and Reception supporting additional speech, language and communication development.

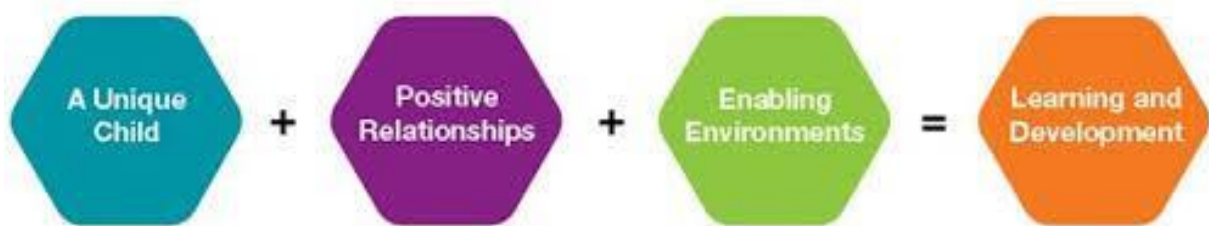
Principles

Our EYFS policy is directly related to our school vision and values. It documents further aims and strategies we employ in order to address the four overarching principles of EYFS, outlined in the EYFS Framework:

[EYFS statutory framework for group and school based providers.pdf](#)

· Every child is **a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

- Children learn to be strong and independently through **positive relationships**.
- 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. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/ or carers.
- We recognise the importance of all areas of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. Our practice is informed by the EYFS framework and covers the education and care of all children in EYFS, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.



Our carefully planned curriculum, quality interactions and use of assessment ensures that we address the seven key features of effective practice:

- Providing the best for every child.
- Offering consistent, high-quality care for all of our children.
- Planning a curriculum with a focus on what we want children to learn.
- Using a range of different approaches to ensure our pedagogy is effective in helping children to learn.
- Implementing a range of assessment strategies to check what children have learnt in order to inform future planning.
- Supporting children to develop their self-regulation and executive function.
- Developing a strong partnership with parents through positive and regular communications.

The Areas of Teaching and Learning

We follow the education programmes as outlined in the EYFS statutory framework. This includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected.

The prime areas are particularly important for learning and forming relationships. They build a foundation for all children to thrive and they provide the basis for learning in all areas.

The 3 prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas. These four specific areas help strengthen and develop the three prime areas, and ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm.

- **Literacy** - Comprehension - Word reading - Writing
- **Mathematics** - Numbers - 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

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

We uphold the view that learning is underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The 3 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.

All of these areas interlink throughout the curriculum and adults make the most of opportunities to interact with children to develop their playing, thinking and learning. Adults also recognise that there are times when they need to take a step back to enable children to think critically and solve a problem by trial and error or perseverance. Supporting children's development linked to these characteristics helps to support children as lifelong learners.

We recognise that teaching can take place at all times of the day through directed teaching sessions, through times of play both inside and outside the classroom and during regular daily events; such as snack time and lunchtime. We strive to make our environments and routines such that they facilitate every available opportunity for teaching. Half termly and weekly planning document this and aim to ensure a balance of formal and informal learning. Staff are encouraged to think carefully about their questions and interventions in children's learning in order to optimise this and we place a strong importance in the teaching and development of vocabulary and the revisiting of activities and skills to allow children to embed their understanding and application of language and vocabulary and make valuable links in their learning.

Curriculum Planning

Our Early Years educational offer sets out an ambitious curriculum which outlines the declarative and procedural knowledge we want our youngest learners to be able to achieve, set out into meaningful units of learning. This takes the form of 6 overarching half termly themes for Nursery and 6 for Reception.

Each half term we develop weekly plans from a skills and knowledge overview which offers a balance of adult led and child initiated learning opportunities. In addition to this we create meaningful enhancements to the learning environments that will support particular learning opportunities as well as continuous provision where children can practice, refine and extend skills,

The use of outdoors is integral and unique to our Early Years offer. Each Early Years classroom has a well-resourced outdoor classroom which is carefully planned for to offer a range of learning opportunities. In addition to this, school has invested heavily into the carefully planned development of wider outdoor spaces including the allotment garden, forest area and 'village' setting.

The use of these areas is carefully planned into our curriculum and can also be used spontaneously. They allow us to take part in rich, meaningful learning experiences and be outdoors for extended periods of time, in all seasons.

Early Language, Reading and Mathematics

At Preston Grange Primary School, we provide a language-rich environment in which high quality talk is highly valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with pupils and each other.

For early phonics teaching, we follow the Read Write Inc. scheme to ensure that we are effective in teaching children to be successful early readers. Home reading materials ensure that the children are given reading books that reflect their phonic knowledge. We strive to promote a love of reading by offering a lending library for all children in Early Years, through daily story and song time and by placing a huge importance in offering high quality and purposeful texts to enhance the learning environment.

We are committed to supporting the development of children's speaking, listening and language skills which we know are crucial for developing children's comprehension and vocabulary. We place a specific focus on closing the vocabulary gap for children starting school with less experience of a language rich environment.

Mathematics is taught through a range of experiences including; counting as part of the daily routine, discreet teaching with follow up adult led activities and play based opportunities and experiences throughout the learning environment. Teachers allow key mathematical concepts to be revisited and developed across the Early Years. We use NCETM materials to support the teaching of Mathematics and place a huge importance on the use of practical activities to support learning.

Assessment

Ongoing teacher judgments of attainment against our half termly curriculum intent is our most important tool in Early Years. We place a sharp focus on the progress of disadvantaged children and children with additional needs and as a result of this we make adaptations on a daily or weekly basis to help identified children achieve and to close educational gaps in knowledge or skills.

There are some statutory elements to assessment in Early Years. On entry to Reception, children take part in the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBS) which is intended to be a progress measure from Reception (start of primary) to Year 6 (end

of Key Stage 2). This assessment is done 1:1 with the class teacher and involves a series of activities that assess early literacy, language and mathematics.

The other statutory obligation in Early Years in the EYFSP; Early Years Profile. This is an assessment made for each child at the end of the Reception year, on exit from Early Years. Children are assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and those achieving the expected level in all prime areas, plus literacy and mathematics are considered to have achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) and are classed as ready to access the Key Stage 1 curriculum in Year 1.

Early Years teachers keep parents and/or carers up to date with their child's progress and development through parent consultations, end of year reports and informally through the use of Tapestry (online learning journeys) . Teachers address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals. Our assessment informs an ongoing dialogue between all staff working in Early Years, as we consider as a team, the best way to support our youngest learners with knowledge or skill development or development linked to the characteristics of effective learning. Our open dialogue about learning and development also extends to our Year 1 teacher to support successful and seamless transition to Key Stage 1.

Inclusion

We value all of our children as unique individuals at Preston Grange Primary School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that aims to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need, and, in doing so, our EYSENDCo works closely with the staff team, parents and outside agencies; making referrals as required. At times, it is necessary to work with children in a small group or on an individual basis outside of the learning environment to allow for specialist input e.g. Speech and Language support. However, whenever possible, support is integrated within the classroom context.

Working in Partnership with Families

As first educators, we know what an important role parents/carers play in their child's learning journey and we aim to involve them as much as possible in school life by developing and sustaining links. These links begin through the transition process before their child starts in our nursery, through clear communication and initial visits and information sessions (these are outlined in more detail in our Transition Policy).

Once children start at Preston Grange, either in Nursery or in our Reception class we aim to use a range of strategies to enable effective partnerships to be maintained. These can include:

- Introductory sessions
- Stay and play sessions
- Reading books shared between home and school
- Newsletters
- Parent workshops – e.g. Phonics sessions with children, outdoor morning etc
- Home/School diaries
- Parents consultations
- Tapestry online learning journey

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible; we always discuss this first with parents to ensure a joint understanding.

Transition

At Preston Grange Primary School we work with the local private settings to ensure that we have detailed information about the children prior to them starting our school Nursery or reception class. We use the Local Authority Early Years Transition document to gather information about children due to join us. In addition to this we have a set programme of transition events which include Welcome meetings for parents, stay and play, transition visits and visits to other settings where appropriate. Please see our Transition Policy for more detailed information. [Transition Policy.docx](#)

