



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Approved by			
Date	Sep 26	Next review due	Sep 27

Summary of Changes

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Approved By
2	Sep 26	Linked legal frameworks have been updated. Updated 'enabling environments' section.	William Overton (Director of Early Years)

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To enable continuous improvement, all readers encouraged to notify the author of errors, omissions and any other form of feedback.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2026) 'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework: For group and school-based providers'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- DfE (2026) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children

Section 1: 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.”
(Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework: For group and school-based providers, 2025)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework (2026), alongside Development Matters, applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At Western House Academy, children will begin the Foundation Stage in Nursery at the age of 3 years. They will then continue their education by joining Reception the following September.

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.

The EYFS is based upon four principles, as specified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, effective September 2026:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults
- Importance of learning and developing, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Section 2: A Unique Child

At Western House 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, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from the early years practitioners to challenge and move learning forward; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the academy and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion

or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our academies.

Within our trust we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities and children from all social and cultural background.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities and experiences to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to identify, at an early stage, and provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in our care are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, what is right and wrong and to help them understand why they exist. We aim to do this through our Values based approach to behaviour management and regulation. We provide children with choices to help them develop these important life skills. Children should be allowed to take risks, but also need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the Academy's Inclusion policy for SEND. We work closely with outside agencies to provide children with tailored and targeted support. Children's home or first language is used, where appropriate, to support learning. SEND inclusion is overseen by the school's SENDCO (Jessica Costelloe, Vice Principal for inclusion and Safeguarding)

Welfare and Safeguarding

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the people caring for them.”

(Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework: For group and school-based providers, 2026)

The Academy will ensure that:

- It follows its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.
- It follows our own Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- All staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. This will include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues.
- Support staff undertake appropriate training and professional development and opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.
- It puts appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families.
- At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate is always on the premises and available when children are present and accompanies them on any outings - the certificate must be for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the EYFS framework.
- Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will hold a PFA certificate.
- All newly qualified entrants to the early years workforce who have completed a level 2 or level 3 qualification on or after 30 June 2016, have either a full paediatric first-aid (PFA) or an emergency PFA certificate within three months of starting work in order to be included in the required staff: child ratios. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in the Welfare office.
- Staff have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the wellbeing of children in their care.
- It is provided with a reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited. This must be logged and kept.
- It follows up on absences in a timely manner. This is to be completed by the Director of Early Years (William Overton), Attendance Officer (Amanda El Kashef) and the Child and Family Support Worker (Sarah Gregory)

At the Park Federation Academy Trust, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare and safeguarding requirements as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (September 2026). We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare, safeguarding and good health of children
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of

development and individual needs.

- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Allocate a 'key person', in the Nursery, to each child to help ensure that every child's care is personalised to meet their individual needs and allow parents and carers the opportunity to discuss any concerns should they arise.
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Staff will be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS will be required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The DSL is Jessica Costelloe (Vice Principal- Inclusion and Safeguarding). The deputy DSLs are Coral Snowden (Principal), Heather Kearney (Deputy Principal), Kyla Parmley (Vice Principal), Sophie Poynter (Vice Principal), Sarah Gregory (Child and Family Support Worker) and William Overton (Director of Early Years).

The DSL will be responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The deputy DSLs will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSLs will undertake child protection training as required.

Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

We endeavor to meet all these requirements, having regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026'.

Safer Eating

As an Academy, we will ensure that:

- We provide healthy, balanced and nutritious snacks. This will be a milk portion a session and fruit or vegetables.
- Fresh drinking water is always available
- A member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate is present when children are eating.
- Information about the child's dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances and special health requirements is provided before they start.
- Where possible, providers are sat facing the children whilst they eat
- We refer to our school's 'Healthy Eating Policy'.

Section 3: Positive Relationships

At the Park Federation Academy Trust, we recognise that children have to learn to be strong and independent. As an academy our aim is to develop a caring, respectful and professional relationship with all the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our Academy; at Western House Academy, all parents will be offered a home visit or Nursery visit prior to their starting in our Nursery and children in Reception who are new to the school
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts in Reception and a chance to tour the Early Years with their child;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk and contribute towards their child's progress throughout the Foundation Stage;
- encouraging parents to talk to a member of staff if there are any concerns. There are formal meeting for parents throughout the year at which the teacher/key worker and the parent discusses the child's progress.
- engage with parents, valuing their input, to gain a holistic picture of the child when completing initial baseline assessments and encourage them to engage with their children's learning throughout the year, including offering stay and play sessions and reading times with their children
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, Academy and parents: Sports Day, Fun Day and Open Days, etc.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen, model and extend their learning.

Section 4: Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum is built around half-termly concepts designed to foster deep, secure knowledge and understanding of foundational ideas, such as personal identity and community. These overarching concepts are delivered through engaging themes, providing children with clear contexts to apply their learning in meaningful ways. This approach allows teachers to introduce and explore key concepts using familiar, inspiring stimuli that ignite curiosity and reinforce long-term learning. Our themes are selected based upon the children's interests or needs. Quality Shared reading books are then also chosen to be taught through the themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning, however individual teachers may alter the plans in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children in their class. This will be annotated on the weekly planning. Themes are subject to change at any point during the year based around that cohort's interests, needs or knowledge.

EYFS will also follow the school's curriculum by embedding VKEE to its curriculum. This include Values, Knowledge, Equality and Experiences. Further information of this can be found on the school's website via 'Our Curriculum Intent'.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the Teachers, Early Years Practitioners and other adults as appropriate. In Reception, evidence may also collected in their Literacy and Mathematics folders.

In line with statutory requirements, the school will undertake a summative assessment of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception, regardless of what time of the year this occurs.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.

Ongoing formative assessments will be used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. Practitioners will interact and observe children to understand their interests and learning needs and will use this information to inform practice and provision for each child.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written report to parents showing their

child's progress against the ELGs.

When undertaking assessment activities, all staff members will have due regard to the school's Early Years Assessment Policy, any advice from the LA, and the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework' and the 'Assessment and Reporting Arrangements' (ARA) for that year.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are prepared with a mix of both adult directed and independent learning, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources of their choice. The reception classrooms will be set up with different areas of learning in each class. During continuous provision, children across the year will be able to access learning from any classroom and an area. Each classroom will ensure they have the following areas: reading, writing, maths and small construction.

The EYFS classes have their own new enclosed outdoor learning area. This exciting environment enhances the children's development in a range of ways, i.e. physical development, communication and language and taking risks. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in a variety of ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and to engage in a range of real-life experiences.

Section 5: Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our academies. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between EYFS staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at the academy and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the different ways learning and interactions can be adapted to meet the needs of the individual child and to ensure that the child's next steps are clearly being addressed;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;

Areas of Learning

The EYFS Curriculum is made up of three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal Social & Emotional Development

There are also four specific areas:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally

important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs), with progressive steps towards each one, which define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development are all interconnected. The children's progress in these areas which indicate ways in which they learn best, are communicated to parents and Year 1 teachers at the end of the Reception Year.

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Exploring and developing with what they know
- Being willing to challenge and extend their learning

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Be motivated to learn
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links with their own experiences
- Choosing ways to do things

Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for boundaries. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Active Learning

Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated, challenged and engaged. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make their own decisions. This provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their own learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support, challenge and extend children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend and challenge their learning.

Section 6: Transition

Starting Nursery

Before the children begin at Nursery they will be invited, with their parents and carers to attend an introductory session where they will meet their key worker and familiarise themselves with the setting. Parents and carers will attend an introductory meeting, be given key information in preparation for their child beginning their journey at Western House. In addition, each child will receive a home visit from their key worker and the class teacher before they start their time in Nursery

From Nursery to Reception

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and allocation of classes and any concerns they may want to express which will ensure a smooth transition is made. Time will be allocated for professional dialogue between Nursery and Reception staff for those children transferring into the Reception classes. All relevant staff will visit the nursery regularly to get to know the children in advance. For any children who attend a different setting, a member of our early years team will visit them in their nursery and speak with their keyworkers. All children are invited to join us for a morning to get to know their new class and teacher. All children will receive a leaflet which contains photographs of the key adults in their class and information they need to prepare for their transition.

From Reception to Key Stage One

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile is made up of observations by staff, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other staff members whom the teacher judges, can offer a useful contribution towards the children's learning.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key Characteristics of Effective Learning. This informs 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.

Section 7: Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy as well as the DfE's Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers (2026). The Principal, Director of Early Years and SLT will carry out monitoring in the EYFS as part of whole school monitoring.

All EYFS staff will attend joint Park Federation moderation meetings to ensure consistency of teaching, learning and assessment.