

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

ISI Reference:	
Rationale for the Policy:	The EYFS creates a solid foundation for all children's future learning. This policy makes explicit all areas of learning in this key stage at GSAL.
Policy aim:	To ensure that all adults are aware of their roles and responsibilities in creating a safe, caring learning environment for the children in the Foundation Stage.
Author:	Deputy Head Pastoral, Primary
Agreed and Authorised by:	Whole school SLT
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**The School runs on FREDIE principles:
Fairness, Respect, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement**

The Grammar School at Leeds
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

We Care
We are Brave
We Grow a Little Every Day

Introduction and Philosophy

At The Grammar School at Leeds, we aim to deliver the highest quality care and education for all our children providing a strong foundation for their future. Our ambition is that all our children develop into curious, independent, lifelong learners and for many of the children this begins in Nursery and Reception. Our high expectations enable children to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally. We ensure that all children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need for the move into Key Stage One.

The Foundation Stage at The Grammar School at Leeds applies to children from three years of age until the end of the Reception year. The majority of pupils join either in Nursery, at the beginning of the school year in which they are four, or in Reception, at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Some children may join Nursery as soon as they are three if there are places available. Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after the child's fifth birthday. Key Stage 1 begins at the beginning of Year 1.

Children in Nursery have a choice of attendance options:

- 9am - 3pm Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays
- 9am - 3pm Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and either Thursdays or Fridays
- 9am - 3pm Monday to Friday

Children in Reception year attend full-time.

Our curriculum is based on the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation stage (revised 2023). It ensures "that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and life."

Children joining Nursery or Reception have often already learnt a great deal from parents, family members and from a range of settings that many may have attended. The early years education that we offer our children is based upon the Early Years Foundation Stage documentation and is based upon the following important principles:

- "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 independent through positive relationships
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates."

Aims of the Foundation Stage

The Foundation Stage covers seven areas of learning and development. All are important and inter-connected but three areas are particularly crucial. These three *prime* areas are:

- communication and language
- physical development

personal, social and emotional development

Four more areas strengthen each child's development . These *specific* areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

The Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- personal, social and emotional well-being in a caring, safe and secure environment
- self-confidence, independence and self-help skills
- opportunities to be active and interactive
- positive relationships with both peers and known adults
- ability to manage and express their feelings and to cope with difficult experiences, fears and apprehensions
- access to opportunities to experience joy in their hearts
- positive self-image
- independent thought, encouraging the development of enquiring minds
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning – we want our children to enjoy the process of learning
- attention skills and persistence, in particular the ability to concentrate
- language, listening and communication skills
- reading and writing
- problem solving, reasoning and mathematical understanding
- knowledge and understanding of the world including an understanding of, and a respect for, their own and other people's beliefs and cultures
- sense of community
- spatial awareness, ability to control their bodies, manipulative skills and hand/eye co-ordination
- interest and engagement with technology
- appreciation of their environment
- creativity and the use of the imagination
- preparation for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of the future

Teaching and Learning Style

Features of good practice at The Grammar School at Leeds which relate particularly to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- the partnership between child and key people, which allows young children to build relationships on a one - to - one basis or within a larger group or class
- outside and inside classrooms as well as the use of the EYFS playground. Use of the lower school library, music room and halls for special events and assemblies then fosters links within the rest of primary.
- the understanding that teachers and teaching assistants have of children's development and learning and how this affects their teaching
- the promotion of children as investigators and active learners who enjoy their achievements
- the active encouragement of children to think critically and develop their own ideas
- the range of approaches used which provide first-hand experiences and extend and develop play and talk
- the clear explanations and appropriate interventions used to scaffold children's learning
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children progress through to the EYFS profile and beyond by the end of the Foundation Stage
- 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 facilities and equipment
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations and assessments which are regularly shared with parents
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring and moderating to evaluate and improve what we do
- the regular identification of continuing professional development needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage and the opportunity to address these needs
- a visit by the child's next teacher to his/her existing class and a visit by the child to his/her new classroom and teacher in the final half term before moving from Nursery to Reception and from Reception to Year 1.

Play in the Foundation Stage

Play underpins the EYFS and through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. Sometimes, this play is planned and purposeful. Sometimes it is spontaneous or responsive. Children often lead their own play and at other times their experience is guided by adults. In their play our children can practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as build on their own ideas. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. Our children have opportunities to play both indoors and outdoors on a continuous basis.

Curriculum – Planning and Practice

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

As effective practitioners, staff consider the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. 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.

PRIME AREAS

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This area of learning helps children become confident and establish constructive relationships with other children, parents and adults. Children develop a positive sense of themselves and their abilities. They learn to work independently, concentrate and persevere with their learning and explore new avenues, initiate ideas and solve practical problems. They learn to show respect for themselves and for others, take turns and share, express their ideas and feelings and respond appropriately to a variety of experiences. They learn to be interested, excited and motivated to learn and have increasing awareness of their own needs. This area is seen as critical for young children in all aspects of their lives and gives them the best opportunity for success in all areas of learning and in life beyond school.

Communication and Language

This area of learning helps children to interact with other people, to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings and to build up relationships with adults and each other. Children use language in imaginary and role-play situations, negotiating plans, developing vocabulary and mastering speech conventions. They listen to, enjoy, make up and respond to rhymes, stories, songs, music, non-fiction books and poems. They learn to enjoy books and to handle them appropriately and with care. Children follow instructions involving several ideas and actions and answer "how" and "why" questions about their experiences. This area of learning underpins all other areas of learning.

Physical Development

This area of learning has two very important aspects; it helps children become more confident in what they do and enables them to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active. It is about improving skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement on both a small and large scale as they interact with one another. It helps children gain better control and co-ordination, as they move safely, confidently and imaginatively, and helps them learn how to handle objects, tools and construction materials safely and with control. Children in Reception have the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills through a weekly teaching session with a PE specialist teacher.

SPECIFIC AREAS

Literacy

In this area of learning children start to develop a love of reading as well as develop their phonic awareness. The meanings of stories are discussed to develop comprehension and this allows children talk about what they have heard in poems, rhymes and stories. They quickly understand that print and pictures carry meaning and they come to associate sound with letters and words. They recognise their own name and those of their friends along with some familiar words in their reading environment. They read and understand simple sentences and use their phonic knowledge to decode regular and some common irregular words. They are also given the opportunity to develop their writing in meaningful situations, enabling them to acquire competence in language as soon as possible, making use of their advances in talking and listening to become successful readers and writers. All children begin learning phonics through following the Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) scheme.

Mathematics

In this area of learning children are enabled to further their understanding of number, calculating, measurement, numerical patterns, shape and space by staff providing a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. They develop a deep understanding of numbers to 10 where a mastery approach is planned for. They learn to enjoy playing with number and understand that it is OK to “have a go” and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

This is the area of learning that satisfies the young child’s urge to know “why”? Their desire to explore and understand their surroundings forms the basis for early religious, historical, geographical and scientific learning. Children begin to solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan and question in a variety of contexts. They discover and explore their environment and people and places that have significance in their lives. They begin to know about and respond positively to their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people, social and physical diversity and they demonstrate a care of the environment and of living things.

Expressive arts and design

This area of learning offers children a way to respond to and refine their vision of the world and share these feelings and responses with others. Being creative enables children to explore a variety of media and to make connections between one area of learning and another, so extending understanding. This area allows children to use and refine all their senses and to express their thoughts and ideas in a personal, imaginative and individualistic way. All EYFS children are offered opportunities to express their ideas through art, movement and dance and music. All Foundation Stage children access music, including weekly or twice– weekly lessons with a specialist music teacher.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum reflects these seven areas of learning but the experiences are not always taught in a discrete form. This enables our children to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning. Children who exceed the goals will progress onto learning that covers a greater depth and experience.

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. In Nursery and Reception, our Long Term Plan outlines the themes to be covered. The Medium Term planning for Topic, Literacy and Mathematics is completed each half term and covers all areas of learning. Our Short Term planning highlights the adult-directed activities to be covered with suitable differentiation, enhancements within the continuous provision and also allows for the development of the theme in response to the children’s interests.

Individual Needs (SEND) and EAL

We believe that all our children are equally important and we give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that the great majority achieve the expected level in each of the 17 Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage Profile by the end of the Foundation Stage and indeed many children progress beyond this point. In addition we pride ourselves on our diverse community at GSAL and a number of a families have English as an additional language.

We identify and meet the needs of students identified as having Individual needs within the resources available.

- planning opportunities that assess, 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
- allowing time for the children to initiate and pursue their own interests and learning whilst adults watch, monitor and sensitively intervene to extend that learning where possible, thus providing a balance of adult-led and child- initiated activities.
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a stimulating, safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- mixed ability and mixed gender classes where expectations are based on the individuals' needs and capabilities
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

For further details on how we support both children with SEND as well as children who have English as an additional language can be found in the Individual Needs Policy on the school website.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

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 written observations and photographs which involves both the teachers and teaching assistants.

At the beginning of their time in Reception, each child is assessed using teacher judgements to form a Baseline assessment of their skills in the prime areas of learning as well as literacy and mathematics. These judgments are made through teacher interaction and observations of working with the children within the provision on a 1:1 basis or in small group work. As an independent school we are not required to complete the government 'Reception Baseline assessment' (RBA) assessment.

An individual, electronic pupil profile is compiled throughout the Foundation Stage.

This record contains photographic and written evidence of a child's experiences and achievements and is shared with parents on a weekly basis. The Nursery and Reception staff track each child's individual progress across the outcomes in the 'Development matters' document as well as the 17 areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum at the end of each term. These judgements are moderated across the year group.

At the end of the child's Reception Year, Reception teachers produce an EYFS data sheet that shows if a child has not met or met the outcomes outlined in each of the 17 Early Learning Goals. This information is shared with parents.

Nursery and Reception parents are invited to attend a parent/ teacher consultation meeting in October and March to discuss how their child has settled at school, to give details of their progress to date in the Prime Areas, Literacy and Mathematics and targets for future development. A written report outlining achievement is issued in both Nursery and Reception at the end of the first term and towards the end of the year. The Reception report also gives details of the child's development in each of the three Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is the responsibility of the Nursery Year Group Leader, the Reception Year Group Leader and the Assistant Head in Phase 1 in the role as EYFS lead. The work of the Year Group Leaders also involves supporting colleagues in the Foundation Stage, being informed and informing others about current developments, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the Foundation Stage. Each member of staff is part of the whole school performance review process and meets annually with their line manager to set targets and discuss their performance. Lesson visits, work scrutiny, moderation of work, formal and informal assessments and observed lessons all form part of our monitoring, review and evaluation process.

The role of parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- inviting parents to meet the teacher at the beginning of the Autumn Term and information is shared with parents to explain to parents the kind of activities that the children undertake in Nursery and Reception
- offering parents regular, informal opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery and Reception classes - parents have the opportunity to talk to their child's teacher at drop off and pick up each day
- valuing and encouraging parental contributions to their child's individual electronic profile
- encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are formal meetings for parents during the Autumn and Spring terms at which the parents have time for a confidential discussion with the class teacher about their child's progress. Parents may also make appointments with their child's teacher at any time throughout the school year to discuss progress or any concerns
- arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents and offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is also a regular communication with home through the child's reading diary

Resources

We plan a stimulating environment that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the communities that the children come from and the wider world. We often encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We are very fortunate to have an extensive range of high quality resources to ensure variety and challenge. Nursery and Reception resources not in use are stored in a shared EYFS storeroom.

Food and Drink

Children in EYFS are provided with milk each morning around 10am.

The children bring a snack from home (in line with the guidance provided by school). In Reception children have their snack in the morning with their milk (or water). In Nursery the snack is eaten in the afternoon at 2.30pm.

Nursery children are taken to the Primary dining room at 11.30am and served by the teaching staff.

Reception children are taken to the Primary dining room at 11.45am and served by the teaching staff.

The children have a hot main meal and dessert and/or fruit. There is a choice of 3 options each day for the main meal and these menus are on a three-week cycle. Copies of the menus are available on the parent portal.

Children with dietary requirements or allergies (eg gluten free) are highlighted to the kitchen staff and a suitable meal is individually prepared for them.

If parents opt to bring packed lunch this is refrigerated until the children go to the dining room.

Fresh drinking water is available in each classroom and children are encouraged to drink regularly throughout the day.

Children attending After School provision (OWLS) are served a light snack and drink on arrival and those staying past

5pm are given a hot evening meal, consisting of a main course and dessert and/or fruit, apart from Friday when no main meal is served but the children are given an additional more substantial snack at 5.15pm.

Safeguarding

In the EYFS we follow the procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children in our care in accordance with the GSAL Child Protection Policy. Mrs Evans, Deputy Head Pastoral is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for primary. As outlined in the GSAL Staff Code of Conduct, the use of mobile phones is not allowed in any area where EYFS children are present.

Key worker

The class teacher is the main key worker for each child in their class, supported by the other adults in the classroom to meet the needs of each individual child. They are responsible for being the main link between families of the children in the class, reporting on each child's progress and ensuring their welfare.

Staff Supervision

All EYFS staff have regular supervision meetings (see Supervision policy). The purpose of these is to continue to safeguard children, identify any training needs and ensure that the member of staff can continually improve the learning and development experiences that they offer. This process is also used to identify where their key children and families need additional support, and the actions to be taken that enables the supervision manager to support the key person in supporting those children and families. All new staff are also required to complete induction training.

Equal Opportunities

Our teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in accordance with our policy on equal opportunities at GSAL

Health and Safety

The whole school Health and Safety policy is implemented in the EYFS. There is always one fully qualified member of staff that works within EYFS that holds a full paediatric first aid certificate. Appropriate risk assessments have been made for the provision. Daily risk assessments of the EYFS area are recorded.

Medication

Pupil medication is administered in accordance with the School's Medicine Policy. As stated in the GSAL Staff Code of Conduct, any staff taking medication which they believe may affect their ability to work safely must inform their line manager immediately. Staff taking medication which they believe may affect their ability to care for children must seek medical advice and only work with children if that advice indicates that it is safe to do so. Any personal medication must be securely stored outside the EYFS area.

Procedure to be followed in the event that a child is not picked up at the appointed time

If a child is not collected at the end of the day, we follow the following procedures:

- The child initially stays with the class teacher or another teacher from their year group until 3.30pm. At 4pm any child not collected from (EYFS) will be taken to the primary school reception area.
- The office staff will check the end of day sheets to ascertain what the end of day arrangements for that child should be. If the child was meant to be collected, the office staff will try to contact the parents/carers.
- If children are not picked up after a club, the staff member running the club will wait 10 minutes and then if any child is not collected, will take the child to the primary reception area and the procedure above will be followed.
- If parents cannot be contacted immediately, the member of SLT on duty will be notified while on-going attempts are made to contact the parents/carers using all the contact numbers available.
- All reasonable attempts will be made to contact the parents/carers.
- If the member of SLT has been unable to contact any parent/carer for a child not collected at the end of the day/club they will discuss with the Vice Principal/DSL what the next steps should be which will include contacting Social Services.
- SLT and/or GSAL Owls staff (our end of day provision) will stay with the child in an open area until either a

trusted adult can collect them or alternative arrangements can be made.

Emergency contact

In the event of an emergency, please contact the primary school between 8am and 5pm on 0113 228 5122. You can also contact the main switchboard 0113 2291552 which is manned from 7.30am until 6pm.

Policy reviewed:

June 2021 by Andrea Evans (Deputy Head Pastoral) and Emma Alderson (Reception Year Group Leader)

May 2022 by Andrea Evans (Deputy Head Pastoral) and Emma Alderson (Reception Year Group Leader)

June 2023 by Andrea Evans (Deputy Head Pastoral), Steph Munro (Assistant Head teacher and Phase 1 Lead)