



Policy Title:	EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY	
Author:	Head of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)	Signed off by Head
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This policy sets out the principles, curriculum, teaching, assessment, safeguarding, welfare and quality assurance arrangements for EYFS provision at Duke of Kent School. It should be read alongside the school's related policies and procedures.

I. Purpose, Vision and Aims:

At Duke of Kent School, we are committed to providing a high-quality Early Years Foundation Stage provision in which every child feels safe, secure, valued, respected and excited to learn. We recognise the Early Years as a crucial stage in children's development and seek to establish strong foundations for future learning, wellbeing and personal development.

Our EYFS provision aims to:

- provide an ambitious, broad, balanced and coherently sequenced curriculum that meets the requirements of the EYFS statutory framework;
- ensure that every child is supported to make strong progress from their individual starting points;
- develop communication, language, vocabulary and listening skills;
- provide a strong foundation in early reading, systematic phonics and mathematics;
- promote physical, social and emotional development and children's wellbeing;
- develop independence, resilience, confidence, cooperation and responsibility;
- provide rich opportunities to investigate, explore, create, problem-solve, reason and think critically;

- provide an appropriate balance of explicit teaching, guided learning, purposeful continuous provision and child-initiated learning;
- provide enabling indoor and outdoor environments where children can revisit, practise, apply and deepen learning;
- ensure that children with SEND and other additional needs receive appropriate support, reasonable adjustments and suitable challenge;
- promote equality of opportunity and inclusive, anti-discriminatory practice;
- safeguard and promote children's welfare, health, safety and wellbeing;
- establish strong, respectful partnerships with parents and carers;
- ensure that children develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and independence needed for a successful transition to Year 1.

Our EYFS provision is designed to develop not only what children know and can do, but also the characteristics and dispositions which enable them to become confident, independent and lifelong learners.

2. Statutory and regulatory Framework

The school's EYFS provision operates within, and has regard to, the following:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: For group and school-based providers, applying from 1 September 2026;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, effective from 1 September 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- relevant health and safety, safeguarding, employment and data protection legislation;
- local safeguarding partnership procedures and arrangements;
- the current Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspection framework.

The EYFS statutory framework sets the standards that early years providers must meet so that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. For the Duke of Kent School, the statutory EYFS requirements are integrated with the school's wider educational aims, safeguarding arrangements and commitment to actively promote children's wellbeing.

ISI context: ISI takes an integrated approach to inspection. Its framework incorporates the EYFS statutory framework into the wider evaluation of leadership, education,

health and wellbeing, social wellbeing and safeguarding. The school therefore seeks to ensure that EYFS policy, practice and quality assurance are aligned and mutually reinforcing.

3. The EYFS Principles

A Unique Child

Every child is a unique individual. We recognise and value children's different experiences, interests, strengths, needs and starting points.

- resilient and capable
- confident and self-assured
- increasingly independent
- motivated to learn

Positive Relationships

Children learn best when they experience secure, respectful and responsive relationships.

- build warm and trusting relationships
- listen carefully to children
- model respectful behaviour
- support friendships, cooperation and empathy
- help children develop emotional regulation
- develop strong partnerships with parents

Enabling Environments

Children's learning is supported by carefully planned environments which provide:

- appropriate challenge
- independence and choice
- exploration and investigation
- repetition and consolidation
- opportunities to practise and apply learning
- rich language and vocabulary
- meaningful indoor and outdoor experiences

Learning and Development

Children develop at different rates and have different learning needs. We provide an appropriate balance of:

- direct teaching
- guided learning
- small-group teaching
- individual interaction
- purposeful continuous provision
- child-initiated learning
- outdoor learning

4. Curriculum

Our EYFS curriculum is ambitious, coherent and progressive. It is based on the seven areas of learning and development.

Prime areas	Specific areas
Communication and Language	Literacy
Physical Development	Mathematics
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Understanding the World
	Expressive Arts and Design

The prime areas underpin children's learning across the curriculum. Communication and Language is deliberately developed throughout the whole EYFS day. Our curriculum progressively develops knowledge, skills, vocabulary, understanding, independence, confidence, problem-solving, resilience and positive learning behaviours.

The Early Learning Goals are end-of-Reception assessment points; they are not the whole curriculum and do not constitute a daily checklist for teaching.

5. Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is designed around what we want children to know, understand and be able to do by the end of Reception.

Communication and Language

attentive listening, sustained conversation, confidence in speaking, rich and ambitious vocabulary, understanding, explaining ideas and experiences.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

self-regulation, emotional understanding, resilience, confidence, independence, positive relationships, cooperation, responsibility.

Literacy

love of books, phonological awareness, systematic phonics knowledge, blending and segmenting, comprehension, mark-making, early writing, spelling, sentence construction.

Mathematics

secure number sense, counting, subitising, comparison, composition, pattern, shape and space, measure, mathematical vocabulary, reasoning and problem-solving.

Understanding the World

themselves and their families, their community, the natural world, people, cultures and communities, the past, technology, geographical concepts.

Expressive Arts and Design

creativity, imagination, musicality, artistic skills, design and construction, role play, confidence in expressing ideas.

Physical Development

gross-motor skills, balance and coordination, fine-motor control, pencil control, tool use, spatial awareness, healthy habits, physical confidence.

6. Planning and Implementation

Planning is based upon a clear progression from children's starting points and is responsive to assessment.

Curriculum intent → teaching → provision → observation/assessment → adaptation → next steps

Long-term planning provides the structure for curriculum progression. Medium-term planning identifies key knowledge, skills, vocabulary, experiences, provision enhancements and opportunities for application. Weekly planning identifies the most important learning priorities and how teaching, provision, adult interaction, adaptive teaching and assessment will support them.

Planning is responsive rather than rigid. Children's interests, questions and fascinations are valued and used to enrich learning without losing curriculum intent or progression.

The EYFS Nursery and Reception 2026–27 planning model integrates systematic Jolly Phonics and White Rose Mathematics progression, rich texts, investigation, continuous provision, outdoor learning and specialist/enrichment experiences. The planning document states that PSED and Communication & Language are continuous golden threads, and that assessment should influence subsequent teaching and provision.

Teaching and Learning

High-quality adult interaction is central to our EYFS practice. Adults:

- model ambitious vocabulary and language;
- introduce and explain new knowledge;
- demonstrate skills and processes;
- ask thoughtful questions and provide thinking time;
- encourage children to explain their thinking;
- extend children's ideas and reasoning;
- support problem-solving and sustained shared thinking;
- scaffold learning appropriately;
- encourage independence and agency;
- adapt teaching in response to children's needs;
- know when to intervene and when to allow children to explore independently.

We recognise play as a key context in which young children practise, apply and deepen learning. We avoid unnecessary adult direction and provide time for children to revisit, practise and apply learning through purposeful play and exploration. Children are not expected to produce identical outcomes; individual responses, creativity and different approaches to problem-solving are valued.

8. Continuous Provision and the Learning Environment

Continuous provision is deliberately designed to enable children to practise, apply and deepen learning independently. It is not simply a collection of activities.

- Resources are accessible, purposeful, well maintained, developmentally appropriate and sufficiently challenging.
- Indoor and outdoor provision are treated as complementary parts of the curriculum.
- Provision is enhanced in response to curriculum intentions, children's interests, assessment, identified gaps, vocabulary development and opportunities for deeper learning.
- Adults use provision as a context for purposeful interaction, observation and assessment.
- Children are encouraged to make choices, solve problems, collaborate and take increasing responsibility for their learning and environment.

Our Reception planning model identifies writing, mathematics, construction, role play, small world, creative, investigation and outdoor provision as purposeful contexts for application, vocabulary, reasoning, collaboration and independence.

9. Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Playing and Exploring

- investigate and explore
- make choices
- try new things
- engage in open-ended experiences

Active Learning

- develop motivation and concentration
- persevere
- develop resilience
- experience satisfaction in achieving

Creating and Thinking Critically

- make connections
- develop ideas
- solve problems
- predict and test ideas
- adapt approaches
- explain thinking

10. Assessment, Observation and EYFS Profile

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. We use assessment to answer:

What does this child know and understand now, and what do they need to learn next?

Assessment is primarily based upon professional knowledge gained through observation, interaction, conversation, children's independent application of learning, work and recorded outcomes where appropriate, and information from parents and previous settings.

We avoid unnecessary recording and do not allow assessment to detract from children's learning or the quality of adult-child interaction.

Starting points

Children's starting points are established through a combination of information from parents and previous settings, observation, interaction and appropriate assessment activities. We do not over-assess children on entry.

Formative assessment

Staff continually assess learning during everyday teaching and provision. Assessment may identify secure learning, developing understanding, misconceptions, gaps, additional support or opportunities for greater challenge.

Assessment informs teaching

Assess → identify → adapt → teach → review

Assessment findings inform subsequent teaching, provision and support. The Nursery and Reception planning model explicitly requires teachers to consider what most children learned securely, which children require further teaching or greater challenge, misconceptions, vocabulary to revisit and changes needed to provision.

EYFS Profile

At the end of Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed in accordance with statutory requirements. Judgements are informed by professional judgement and knowledge gathered throughout the year. The school does not seek to manufacture evidence solely for assessment purposes. Teachers consider children's learning across different contexts and, where applicable, the reasonable adjustments and strategies routinely used by individual children.

11. Inclusion, SEND and Adaptive Teaching

We are committed to ensuring that every child can access the EYFS curriculum and participate fully in school life.

Children with SEND are supported in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice, the school's SEND Policy and the graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review.

- parents and carers
- SENCO
- class teachers
- teaching assistants
- external professionals where appropriate

Adaptive teaching may include:

- additional modelling
- visual support
- concrete resources
- repetition

- adjusted language
- smaller steps
- additional adult support
- sensory or environmental adjustments
- alternative ways of demonstrating understanding

We maintain high expectations while changing the route to the learning where necessary. Children who demonstrate secure understanding are provided with opportunities for greater depth, reasoning, independence and transfer rather than simply additional work.

We promote an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture and challenge stereotypes, prejudice and discriminatory behaviour.

12. Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff must understand and follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and relevant procedures.

It could happen here.

The school operates a child-centred approach. Staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role and understand:

- the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect;
- how to report concerns and the role of the DSL and Deputy DSL;
- what to do if the DSL is unavailable;
- allegations and concerns about staff and volunteers;
- whistleblowing;
- appropriate information sharing;
- accurate and timely record keeping;
- online safety;
- attendance and absence concerns;
- the importance of professional curiosity;
- the need to act promptly when concerns arise.

Safeguarding arrangements are reviewed regularly and form part of the school's wider safeguarding audit and quality assurance processes. The school follows KCSIE 2026 from 1 September 2026 and the current local safeguarding partnership arrangements.

13. Health, Safety and Welfare

The school meets the welfare requirements of the EYFS and maintains safe and suitable premises, equipment, staffing and supervision.

- appropriate supervision and statutory staffing ratios;
- paediatric first aid and first-aid arrangements;
- medication and individual healthcare needs;
- allergies and dietary requirements;
- food safety and safer eating;
- hygiene and infection prevention;
- toileting and intimate care;
- sun protection and drinking water;
- physical activity and access to outdoor learning;
- rest and wellbeing;
- risk assessment and safe use of equipment;
- fire and emergency procedures;
- missing-child procedures;
- collection and handover arrangements;
- safe premises and equipment.

The September 2026 EYFS framework makes safer sleep requirements more explicit within the main statutory framework and introduces a requirement for providers to have regard to guidance on children's screen use. The school will ensure that policies and day-to-day practice reflect the current statutory framework.

14. Safer Sleep and Rest

Although routine sleep is not normally a feature of our Nursery and Reception provision, any child who needs to rest or sleep at school will be cared for in accordance with the statutory EYFS requirements and relevant safer-sleep guidance.

- sleep/rest arrangements will be safe and appropriate to the child's age and needs;
- children will be appropriately supervised;
- staff will know the relevant procedures and act promptly if a concern arises;
- individual health, developmental and welfare needs will be taken into account;
- any necessary records or risk assessments will be maintained.

15. Children's Screen Use and Digital Safety

Technology is used purposefully and appropriately to enhance learning. It does not replace conversation, active play, physical activity, first-hand experiences, books, practical exploration or social interaction.

- screen use will be age appropriate and linked to a clear educational purpose;
- children will be supervised when using digital technology;
- adults will model appropriate and balanced technology use;
- online safety will be addressed in an age-appropriate way within wider safeguarding provision;
- screen use will be reviewed to ensure it supports rather than displaces high-quality early years experiences.

The school will have regard to the DfE guidance on children's screen use in early years settings from September 2026.

16. Food, Nutrition and Safer Eating

We promote healthy eating and positive attitudes towards food. Staff follow the school's Food and Allergy Policy and relevant procedures.

- allergies and intolerances
- dietary requirements
- food hygiene
- choking risks
- safe preparation and handling
- appropriate supervision during eating
- appropriate portioning and presentation

Children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating, sit safely, develop independence, make healthy choices and drink water regularly. Concerns relating to eating, allergies or welfare are reported promptly in accordance with school procedures.

17. Behaviour, Relationships and Emotional Regulation

We recognise that young children are developing their ability to regulate emotions and behaviour. Relationships are encouraged to be warm, respectful and consistent. We aim to:

- model calm and respectful behaviour;
- establish clear and consistent expectations;

- teach children how to recognise and manage feelings;
- support co-regulation and gradually build self-regulation;
- encourage children to resolve age-appropriate conflicts;
- promote kindness, empathy and respect;
- recognise positive behaviour and effort;
- maintain children's dignity.

Behaviour is understood in the context of children's developmental stage, individual needs and circumstances. Repeated, discriminatory or harmful behaviour is addressed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures where appropriate. We have trained ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) on our staff who provide sessions of support to pupils requiring help with emotional literacy and self-regulation.

18. Physical Development, Health and Independence

Physical development is promoted throughout the day and forms an important part of children's wellbeing and readiness to learn.

- daily opportunities for outdoor activity and physical development;
- gross-motor development, balance, coordination and spatial awareness;
- climbing, balancing and negotiating space safely;
- fine-motor development, mark-making, cutting, threading and construction;
- PE and swimming where appropriate;
- active learning and movement;
- development of healthy habits;
- independence in dressing, toileting, personal hygiene and managing belongings.

19. Communication, Language and Early Literacy

Communication and Language is a continuous golden thread through the EYFS day. Adults create frequent opportunities for listening, conversation, vocabulary development, storytelling, explanation and sustained shared thinking.

Early literacy includes a love of books, systematic phonics, oral blending and segmenting, comprehension, purposeful mark-making, writing and spelling. Jolly Phonics is used systematically in accordance with the Reception progression plan, with pace adapted in response to assessment.

Children are given regular opportunities to listen to high-quality texts, retell stories, develop vocabulary, talk about ideas and experiences, and apply phonics knowledge in reading and writing.

20. Mathematics

Mathematics is taught explicitly and reinforced through purposeful provision, routines, play and real experiences.

- number sense and counting
- subitising
- comparison and composition
- pattern
- shape and space
- measure
- mathematical vocabulary
- reasoning and problem-solving

White Rose Mathematics provides the main progression framework for Reception. Concrete resources, practical experiences, representations, discussion and reasoning are used before children are expected to work abstractly. Assessment informs pace, support and challenge.

21. Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design

Children develop knowledge and understanding of themselves, their families and communities, the natural world, people and cultures, the past, technology and geographical ideas. Learning is enriched through first-hand experiences, investigation, outdoor learning, visitors, stories and the wider school environment.

Expressive Arts and Design provides opportunities for children to develop imagination, creativity, music, artistic skills, design, construction, role play and confidence in expressing ideas. Children are encouraged to make choices and develop their own ideas rather than simply reproduce adult models.

22. Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise parents and carers as children's first and most enduring educators. We establish respectful two-way communication and seek information that helps us understand each child's interests, development, experiences, achievements, needs and wellbeing.

- induction and familiarisation opportunities;
- meetings and parent consultations;
- regular communication and curriculum information;
- home-learning opportunities;

- reports and sharing children's achievements;
- appropriate invitations to school events;
- prompt discussion of concerns about learning, development or wellbeing;
- opportunities for parents to contribute feedback that can inform improvement.

23. Transition

Transition is carefully planned to promote continuity, belonging and emotional security.

- home into school
- nursery or pre-school into Reception
- transitions within the EYFS
- Reception into Year 1

Where appropriate, we liaise with previous and receiving settings and share relevant information. Transition into Year 1 focuses on ensuring children are confident, independent, resilient, secure in relationships, increasingly able to sustain attention, and developing secure foundations in phonics, literacy and mathematics.

The Reception curriculum is designed to prepare children for the next stage of education without narrowing learning solely to Year 1 expectations.

24. Staff Qualifications, Ratios, Suitability and Professional Development

The school meets statutory requirements relating to staff suitability, qualifications, ratios, supervision, paediatric first aid, safeguarding and deployment.

Staff deployment is planned to prioritise children's safety, wellbeing, learning and high-quality interaction. Staff must not be deployed in a way that compromises supervision or provision.

All staff receive induction and ongoing professional development appropriate to their role. EYFS professional development includes safeguarding, child development, curriculum, phonics, mathematics, assessment, SEND/adaptive teaching, health and welfare, and any changes to statutory guidance.

The EYFS Lead and Headteacher ensure that changes to statutory requirements are communicated and reflected in practice.

25. Leadership, Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for EYFS provision. The EYFS Lead leads curriculum development, progression, assessment, monitoring, staff development, provision, transition, parent partnership and support for high-quality teaching.

Quality assurance includes:

- learning walks
- observation of teaching and adult interaction
- review of planning and curriculum progression
- scrutiny of children's learning
- assessment moderation
- curriculum review
- monitoring of phonics and mathematics
- safeguarding and welfare checks
- review of continuous provision
- professional discussion with staff
- parent feedback
- evaluation of children's progress, learning and wellbeing

Monitoring is used to answer three questions:

1. What are we intending children to learn?
2. How effectively is this being taught?
3. What difference is it making to children's knowledge, skills, development, independence and wellbeing?

Self-evaluation → action → implementation → review → impact

Where monitoring identifies an area for development, an appropriate action is agreed, implemented and reviewed. The school seeks to ensure that policy, curriculum, teaching, provision, assessment and children's experience are coherent and mutually reinforcing.

26. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key responsibility
Headteacher	Overall leadership and accountability for EYFS provision.
EYFS Lead	Curriculum, assessment, monitoring, staff development, quality assurance and transition.

Class Teachers	Planning, teaching, assessment, safeguarding, welfare and parent communication.
Teaching Assistants	Supporting teaching, learning, welfare, independence, relationships and provision.
DSL	Safeguarding and child protection oversight.
SENCO	SEND identification, provision, monitoring and professional liaison.
All staff	Safeguarding, welfare, high-quality interaction and implementation of the EYFS curriculum.

27. Records, Information Sharing and Confidentiality

The school maintains appropriate records relating to children's development and assessment, attendance, safeguarding, SEND, medication, accidents and incidents, parent communication and transition.

Records are maintained securely and handled in accordance with the school's data protection and confidentiality procedures. Information is shared where necessary to safeguard and promote children's welfare and in accordance with statutory requirements.

Assessment records are proportionate and purposeful. The school does not require staff to generate unnecessary evidence solely for inspection or accountability purposes.

28. Complaints and Concerns

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise concerns promptly with the appropriate member of staff. Concerns and complaints are handled fairly, respectfully and in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

Where a concern relates to safeguarding, it will be managed through the school's safeguarding procedures rather than the ordinary complaints process where appropriate.

29. Related Policies and Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Online Safety Policy

- Attendance Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Missing Child Procedure
- Intimate Care Policy
- Food and Allergy Policy
- Reception Curriculum / Year Plan
- Phonics progression
- White Rose Mathematics progression
- EYFS monitoring and quality assurance schedule

30. Policy Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where there are significant changes to statutory requirements, national guidance or school provision.

The EYFS Lead and Headteacher will ensure that relevant changes to the EYFS statutory framework, safeguarding guidance and school provision are reflected promptly in policy, staff guidance and practice.

The effectiveness of this policy will be considered through the school's normal quality assurance processes, including monitoring, professional dialogue, feedback and evaluation of impact on children's learning, development, safety and wellbeing.

Appendix 1 – Key Statutory and Inspection References

- Department for Education, Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: For group and school-based providers – applies from 1 September 2026.
- Department for Education, Early years framework: changes from 1 September 2026.
- Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 – in force from 1 September 2026.
- Department for Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Department for Education, Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended.
- Independent Schools Inspectorate, Inspection Framework – current framework and Early Years requirements.

Appendix 2 – Duke of Kent EYFS Quality Assurance Cycle

Stage	Key question	Evidence / action
Intent	What do we want children to know, understand and be able to do?	Curriculum overview, progression, subject/area plans
Implementation	How effectively is this being taught and experienced?	Teaching, interactions, provision, enrichment, professional discussion
Assessment	What do we know about children's learning and development?	Observation, conversation, work, assessment information
Adaptation	What needs to change?	Targeted teaching, adaptive provision, SEND support, reteaching
Impact	What difference is it making?	Progress, knowledge, independence, wellbeing and children's experience
Improvement	What should we do next?	Self-evaluation, action planning, monitoring and review

Policy principle: We do not create an 'inspection version' of Nursery and Reception. Our aim is that the high-quality practice described in this policy is the practice children experience every day