



Early Years Policy 2026

Adopted by the Local Governing Body of
Park Lane Primary and Nursery School

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Early Years Policy 2026- 2027

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1. Aims

Our high expectations will enable children to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will ensure that all our children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start in Key Stage One.

“Children develop quickly in the early years, and early years practitioners aim to do all they can to help children have the best possible start in life. Children have a right, spelled out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender.” The British Association for Early Childhood Education

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Park Lane Primary and Nursery School, children are able to join Nursery at the age of 3 and start Reception in the year they turn 5. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5. At the school we have a 52 place Nursery. The morning sessions run from 8:30am-11:30am and the afternoon sessions from 12:30pm-3:30pm.

We have two reception classes with 30 children. To ensure best practice we have two adults, one teacher and one teaching assistant attached to each class.

2.1 Current Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 statutory framework of the EYFS. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The **prime areas** are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 **specific areas**:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

2.2 EYFS Reform 2021

The government has carefully considered all responses to the consultation on the proposed educational programmes and, in light of this, the following changes have been made and implemented as part of the reformed EYFS statutory framework:

- Communication and language will remain as proposed;
- PSED includes additional information on self-care and healthy eating;
- Physical Development has been strengthened to include a greater focus on development from birth to reception and on the link between gross and fine motor skills;
- Literacy has a stronger emphasis on pre-reception literacy learning, and the link between language comprehension and later reading and writing;
- Mathematics includes a greater detail on the importance of shapes, spatial reasoning and measure as part of early maths learning, and how children can foster a love of maths;
- Understanding the World includes wider experiences for children; and
- Expressive Arts and Design includes a wider variety of ways children can develop their creative skills.

Staff at the school have been trained and are kept up-to-date with the changes that have been implemented in the EYFS Reform to ensure the teaching practise is current.

3. Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. We follow a blended approach in our curriculum. This involves creating a curriculum that is knowledge based, focusing on what we want our children to know and do. This then runs alongside planning in the moment which is done through continuous provision and high quality interactions, to develop the unique child and follow children's individual skills and interests. We display a weekly planning sheet where staff see the knowledge to be learned across the week, key vocabulary that the children should know and how we are to embed all of this in our environment. Wow moments and planning in the moment is recorded in the form of photographs and observations on Seesaw.

- Phonics is taught daily using the initiative Read Write Inc. which begins in the spring term in Nursery, is taught across Reception and continues in Key Stage One.
- We introduce maths concepts through play experiences and through some short, adult led sessions.
- We plan using all areas, including outdoors. Staff take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.
- Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.
- Our progression document shows the clear progression of learning between children in nursery and reception as well as the links to learning that will prepare them for the year 1 curriculum. This document is used to underpin all of the planning in early years.

4. Teaching, Assessment and Reporting

4.1 Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Our approach to teaching in the EYFS is rooted in high-quality interactions, purposeful routines, and carefully planned experiences that enable every child to thrive. We believe that teaching is most effective when it is responsive, engaging, and tailored to individual needs.

Language and Communication

- Daily routines and interactions are designed to develop children's language and vocabulary across all areas of learning, supporting them to communicate effectively and manage their thoughts and feelings.
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- Staff engage children in rich, high-quality conversations, scaffolding and modelling language to help them articulate what they know and understand.
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- Songs and rhymes are used to build emotional connections to language and develop control and confidence in speaking.

Reading and Stories

- Teachers prioritise daily story time, reading aloud and re-reading high-quality texts. They talk with children about stories to deepen understanding and build familiarity, fostering a lifelong love of reading.

Mathematics

- Staff help children describe patterns, quantities, and shapes in the world around them, making mathematics enjoyable and meaningful.
- Mathematical concepts are introduced in a carefully sequenced way, allowing children to practise and apply their knowledge across all areas of learning.

Responsive and Intentional Teaching

- Staff make informed choices about what, when, and how to teach, based on children's age, context, and starting points. Activities are selected to sustain attention and focus on intended learning outcomes.
- Teachers ensure children have the foundational knowledge needed to succeed, providing additional teaching and practice for those who require extra support.

Practice and Progress

- Information is presented clearly, understanding is checked, and gaps in knowledge are addressed promptly. Children have frequent opportunities to practise and consolidate learning.
- In Reception, staff provide sufficient teaching and practice to develop a comfortable pencil grip and increasing fluency in reading, spelling, handwriting, and number facts.

Professional Focus

- Staff prioritise meaningful interactions with children over time spent observing and recording evidence, ensuring that teaching remains at the heart of practice.

4.2 Assessment and Reporting

In Early Years, feedback is a vital part of the assessment process and is guided by our EYFS Marking and Feedback Policy. Feedback is primarily verbal and given in the moment to ensure immediate impact on learning. Where written feedback is used, it is age-appropriate and focuses on celebrating success and addressing misconceptions. Teachers distinguish between mistakes (slips) and errors (knowledge gaps) and support children in correcting these through modelling and guided practice. Our approach ensures that feedback is purposeful, consistent, and helps children to make progress by reducing errors over time. All marking and feedback strategies are monitored through the EYFS Marking and Feedback Framework to maintain fidelity and effectiveness.

- Children in nursery and reception have a baseline assessment to assess their starting points. This is then used to inform planning.
- Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff use a range of adult-initiated tasks, progress tasks and observations to shape future planning and ensure all children make progress.
- At the end of each half term, children are assessed against the 7 areas of learning to ascertain if they are 'on track' or 'not on track'. Children who are deemed not to be 'on track' are then targeted through intervention and small group work to support their learning and help them to make progress.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/ or carers in July.

5. Transition into Year One

Transition from Reception to Year One presents a unique challenge as children move from the play-based approach of the Early Years Foundation Stage to the demands of Key Stage One.

- Leaders and Teachers from both EYFS and Year 1 discuss the autumn term planning strategies and where applicable tailor it to the needs/interests of the cohort.
- Staff will use the early learning goals objectives when appropriate. Reception plans are adapted to enable guided group work and challenges and to enable the children to take more responsibility for their learning.
- Activities are interactive, with a mixture of adult led and child initiated. The plans follow the EYFS curriculum, with challenges for the children who are ready.

6. Funding

6.1 30 Hours Free Childcare

The government's 30-hours funded childcare places for working parents of three- and four-year-olds differs from the 15 hours childcare offer (see below).

You will be eligible for the 30-hour funded childcare offer if:

- You earn more than the equivalent of 16 hours at the national living wage or minimum wage per week: for example, over the next three months you expect to earn at least £1,813.76 - the National Living Wage if you are 25 or older.

There is no requirement to work a certain number of hours per week – it is all about how much you earn. This means if you only work 10 hours a week but earn £12 per hour, you will meet the minimum earning threshold. Apprentices are also eligible as long as they earn the equivalent to 16 hours at the apprentice minimum wage.

AND

- You earn less than £100,000 per year.
This applies if you are **self-employed or on a zero-hours contract** and expect to meet the earning criteria on average over the three months after you have applied for the 30-hours. HMRC will look at data such as your previous earnings to consider whether you are likely to meet the criteria and may contact you for further information if they are unsure.

If you are starting up your own business, you will not be expected to meet the minimum earning criteria in your first year of trading.

If you are not working but you expect to take up paid work within 31 days, you can still apply for 30 hours, as long as you expect to meet the income criteria over the coming three months.

If you are a single parent and meet the above criteria, you will be eligible for the 30 hours. If you live with a partner, you both must meet the above criteria. This still applies if one of you is not the child's parent – for example, if you have remarried or have started living with a new partner. If you are separated/divorced from your child's parent, the eligibility rules will only apply to the parent that the child normally lives with (and their new partner if they are part of the same household).

If you are on shared parental, maternity, paternity or adoption leave, you can still apply for the 30 hours. If you're on adoption leave for a child aged three- to four-years-old, you must return to work within 31 days of the date you first apply for 30 hours free childcare.

6.2 15 Free Hours Childcare

All 3 to 4-year-olds in England can get 570 free hours per year. It's usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, but you can choose to take fewer hours over more weeks, for example.

Some 3 to 4-year-olds are eligible for 30 hours free childcare a week. [Check if you're eligible and find out how to apply.](#)

The free early education and childcare:

- stops when your child starts in reception class (or reaches compulsory school age, if later)

You can get it from the term after your child's 3rd birthday.

7 Working with Parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/ or carers. Parents and/ or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/ or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. The children each have a Seesaw online learning journal and parents are regularly informed about their child's learning through this. In our Nursery each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs.

8 Health & Safety

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance and adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and participate in the free fruit and milk for under-fives scheme. For our Reception children we provide the universal infant free school meal and the menu is regularly monitored with the chef. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal.

Fresh water is readily available for all children and we encourage children to bring in water bottles with water only.

Children are taught the importance of oral hygiene, keeping clean and washing their hands correctly.

9 Inclusion

All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will be differentiated accordingly. In addition to this where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and where needed with liaison with the Special Needs Co-ordinator. (Please refer to the school's 'Special Needs Policy' for greater detail). The needs of children with English as an additional language will be met through planning and support alongside any other relevant support that is available.