

At Two Gates we want all pupils to attain the very best outcomes in their academic achievement and personal development. The school motto is Love Children, Love Learning and this is at the heart of all we do at Two Gates. Being at primary school should be a happy and fulfilling time for every child. Our job is to make sure this happens by providing a nurturing, safe environment and an ambitious, accessible curriculum that challenges and excites pupils, delivered in a progressive and systematic way so that learning really sticks.

Being part of the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership enhances the opportunities and experiences we can provide the children through meaningful collaboration at all levels. We are stronger together.

“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.”

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, Department for Education 2024

### **Our Intent and Aims**

Within Early Years at Two Gates Primary School we aim to;

- give each child a happy, positive and enjoyable start to their school life within a safe and secure environment
- secure foundational knowledge and foster a deep love of learning
- enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually in order to thrive in a diverse and ever changing world
- offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development
- offer a vocabulary rich and aspirational curriculum that prepares children for the next stages of learning.
- encourage children to develop independence within a nurturing and supportive atmosphere
- support children to build relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing
- help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements by experiencing success and developing their confidence to work towards personal goals

### **Legislation**

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2024 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) .

### **Structure of the EYFS**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5 years.

In our school we have 1 Nursery class and 1 full-time Reception class.

The nursery class has 26 places and children are offered a funded place, the term after they turn 3. In Nursery staffing includes 2 level three teaching assistants, with planning and assessment overseen by the Early Years Lead. Children attend our Nursery on either a part time basis for 15 hours per week or for 30 hours per week. These places can be funded by Early Years childcare or supplemented through additional payments. Each child starting Nursery in September is guaranteed a minimum of three terms attendance before they enter full time school.

The Reception class has a teacher and a teaching assistant. Children will all attend on a full-time basis from the start of the year.

In partnership with parents, we support the children in their learning journey through a rich variety of skills and experiences that provide the right foundations for outstanding progress through school and in life.

The EYFS is based upon these principles:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident, self-assured and excited learners.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming curious and independent
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – an acknowledgement that the children learn in different ways and at different rates by understanding the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning i.e. Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Critical Thinking.

To ensure best practice and continuity, our foundation stage classes work closely together following half-termly themes throughout the phase.

### **The Curriculum**

Our Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. This framework defines what we teach and we use Development Matters guidance to support our curriculum. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. Three of the areas are referred to as the Prime areas. These are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving (Early Years Framework 2024)

#### **The prime areas are:**

##### Communication and language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

##### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

### Physical Development

- Fine Motor
- Gross Motor

The Prime areas are strengthened and applied through the further four areas which are referred to as the Specific areas.

### Literacy

- Comprehension
- Word Reading
- Writing

### Mathematics

- Numbers
- Numerical patterns

### Understanding the World

- Past and present
- People, culture and communities

### Expressive Arts and Design

- Creating with materials
- Being imaginative and expressive

We enrich the Early Years framework with our contextualised, knowledge driven curriculum to enhance the experience and opportunities available to the children. This includes special events and celebrations, memorable experiences and themes selected to drive the curriculum. Broad topics will be planned through observations and discussions with the children and a topic will only last as long as the children are interested in it.

Our Synthetic and Systematic Phonics scheme is Read, Write, Inc and we have high fidelity to the scheme. Direct teaching of phonics takes place every day for all children from the start of the Reception year. Children in Nursery become familiar with the pictures related to the phonemes, as well learning the early sounds.

'It is the role of the setting to help children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning'. Ofsted Early Years Inspection Handbook, May 2024

### **Play**

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. Therefore, we follow Curiosity pedagogy and we have environments that provide continuous provision. Continuous provision starts in our Nursery where the classroom and outdoors are set up with learning areas. Each learning area has cross-curricular resources, which children can access independently throughout the day. Reception classrooms and outdoor area are also set up with areas of learning, offering continuous provision to build upon and deepen experiences and learning from Nursery.

Continuous provision provides children with stimulating, active play to encourage creative and critical thinking alongside other children, as well as on their own. Children are able to practise skills, build

upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interest, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling and questioning. They teach and extend play whilst developing skills and language.

We understand that outdoor play is of equal importance as indoor play and that the outdoor classroom offers children 'bigger', 'louder' and 'messier' experiences. We therefore aim to offer free flow access to our outdoor learning areas throughout the school day.

### **Characteristic of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' which help practitioners identify a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring**- children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning**- children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties, they enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically**- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

### **Teaching**

We ensure there is a balance of child- initiated learning through continuous provision, and adult led activities, across the school day. There will be Teacher Directed Activities where practitioners will teach skills and concepts, Teacher Led Activities where practitioners will support and embed prior learning together with Child Initiated and Child Led activities where the children choose the activities that enable them to develop, scaffold and embed learning with their peers and are supported appropriately by practitioners. The adults respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. The interaction between the adult and child is essential. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to complete a task with them; at other times they will participate in the child's play, extending it where possible.

There are set routines that we follow each day. There are designated times when the children come together to be taught and we focus on maths, literacy, phonics, stories and topic work. These times provide the opportunity for children to develop their ability to work as a group to listen, to take turns, to answer and concentrate.

Our work is research informed. We have used the work of Alister Bryce-Clegg and Anna Ephgrave around open ended resources which enable pupils to drive forward their learning. We have also employed techniques from Greg Botrill – (Can I Go and Play Now) which ensures that there are exciting hooks to stimulate ideas and learning. Adult interactions must be meaningful and supportive and not "interfering".

Practitioners are aware of individuals and groups next steps and support in play-based opportunities to scaffold children's learning. For example, an adult maybe observing a group of children who are using the mud kitchen in a repetitive way. So, the staff may support their play by providing clipboards for mark making and writing recipes, scales for weighing ingredients and enhancing the recipes by encouraging the children to collect natural materials from the environment.

Whilst Child Led learning is favourable, it is recognised that for some learning, groups of children will need to be taken to complete specific tasks. We recognise that different children need quantities and types teaching and some need more opportunities to practice than others (Strong foundations in the first years of school 2024). Teacher Directed Learning sessions are carefully matched to the learning needs of the individuals and groups of children. As children grow older and as their development allows the balance gradually shifts towards more Teacher Led activities to help the children prepare for the next stage in their education.

Whole class reading, story and singing time are important parts of the day. We want our children to develop of lifelong love of reading. Children are exposed to a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction texts to provide them with opportunities to hear and use new vocabulary. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story during the day, as well as opportunities to enjoy books within the continuous provision.

The teaching of reading begins as soon as possible in Reception. Children will begin with a daily Read Write Inc. (RWI) phonics session taught as a whole class, covering set 1 sounds as well as oral blending and segmenting. After these sounds have been taught, individual assessments will take place to allow the children to be split into ability groups. As the year progresses, phonics sessions will increase in length and include a speed sound lesson and a reading lesson. The children will be assessed every 6 weeks (or as needed if earlier) and progress will be recorded. At the appropriate time, they will take a RWI reading book appropriate to the stage they are working at. Generally, all children should be accessing the phonically decodable worded books by the end of term 2. Virtual classroom links are sent home to parents so that children can continue learning to read and write at home, as well as practice sheets and reading books when the child is ready.

Reading is further developed in Reception using Talk through stories which is designed to extend and deepen children's vocabulary so that they can understand the books they will be able to read for themselves. In Story week, children to get to know the story really well: the plot, the characters, and their actions and motives. In Vocabulary week, they explore eight words from the story, specifically selected to develop children's understanding of each word in the context of their everyday lives.

A mastery approach to mathematics begins in Nursery using Master the Curriculum linked to White Rose Maths, Development Matters and Birth to 5; as well including nursery rhymes and high quality texts. In Reception, the mastery approach to mathematics is taught through NCTEM Mastering Number and Can Do maths- rooted in three ideas: Teaching for Understanding, Belief and Hard Work.

Writing is developed through Drawing Club (Gregg Botrill) which is based on the 3 Ms: Making conversation, mark making and mathematics. Drawing is the hook which naturally leads into the joy of writing. There is a strong focus on securing the foundational knowledge of writing Reception which includes: letter formation and pencil grip, oral composition of sentences and writing dictated words and sentences within a child's phonetic range (transcription). (Strong foundations in the first years of school 2024.)

### **Planning**

Practitioners plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to learn effectively. They also take into account the children's individual needs, interests and stages of development and use this information to plan challenging and meaningful experiences. Planning is based upon themes with discrete lessons in phonics, reading, writing and maths.

Practitioners create an attractive, open ended and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment which is set up in discreet areas of learning and planned continuous provision. We also provide access to a stimulating, challenging and progressive Forest School area.

Effective learning builds and extends on prior learning and following interests. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's "learning journey" to show "WOW" moments and development in their learning.

Each learning area in the classrooms and outdoor areas have provision plans, which identify learning opportunities and suggested enhancements. Staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. They also respond to children's social and emotional needs as well as their academic achievement.

Where pupils are falling behind, bespoke interventions are put in place immediately to help them keep up with their peers. Where a pupil may have a special educational need or disability practitioners consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies where appropriate.

### **Assessment**

Progress and curriculum coverage are monitored termly. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Practitioners observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are then used to inform future planning. Formal end of term assessments are recorded on Bromcom throughout school from Reception to Year 6 and staff meet to discuss next steps for pupils who are identified as at risk of falling behind. Action plans for interventions are put in place ready for the next half term. Staff have daily discussions regarding pupil progress and act in timely way to offer support where necessary.

Within the first 6 weeks of term, practitioners will complete a baseline assessment forming judgements based on their observations of the pupils. These will be used to assess the pupils entry levels and will allow staff to plan for progression. Practitioners also have a statutory obligation to administer The Reception Baseline which "is a short, interactive and practical assessment of your child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school, using materials that most children of your child's age will be familiar with. It became statutory for all schools from September 2021. The purpose of the assessment is to provide the starting point for a new measure that will help parents understand how well schools support their pupils to progress between reception and year 6" (Information for Parents STA Reception baseline 2022).

Observations and assessments are recorded on pupils ClassDojo portfolios which parents can access.

At the end of the EYFS (end of Reception), practitioners complete the EYFS profile (Statutory requirement) for each pupil. Pupils are assessed against the 16 early learning goals, indicating whether they are;

- 'Expected' - meeting expected levels of development or,
- 'Emerging'- not yet reaching the expected levels of development

Pupil's development levels are assessed as the year progresses. If a pupil's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with parents and agree how to support the child.

Practitioners moderate judgements termly with members of SLT in school and with other schools from within the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership. At the end of the year EYFSP judgements are discussed and moderated with Year 1 staff.

### **Parent Partnership**

We believe that education is a shared responsibility between school and home. We recognise that parents are first and most enduring educators and we greatly value the contribution they make to their children's education. We recognise the role that parents have played and their future role in educating the children. We therefore work very closely to ensure that parents are involved in their child's education. We understand the importance of parents views, so provide opportunities for feedback throughout the school year.

We do this through:

- Talking to parents/carer about their child before they start school
- Inviting parents to induction meetings during the term before their child starts school and to workshops during the Reception year in order to detail how we aim to work with their child.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting with parents twice a year at which parents and teacher discuss their child's progress towards the end of year ELGs.
- Parents receive a report on their children's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Arranging a range of activity afternoons throughout the year that encourages collaboration between children, school and parents.
- Providing parents opportunities to celebrate and share their child's learning and development by coming into school to events such as parties and shared breakfasts.
- Sending out a weekly newsletter from the classroom which includes activities to embed learning at home and celebrating events and achievements with the class.

### **Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures**

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. 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 educate children on the importance of boundaries, rules and limits and we encourage them to become responsible for their own behaviour by supporting them to make the right choices. We teach the children how to recognise and manage risks in a supervised learning environment. We aim to protect the physical and mental well-being of all children. Please refer to our school's Safeguarding policy further information.

Our Safeguarding and Welfare procedures are outlined in our Child Protection policy.

In line with statutory requirements all EYFS staff have supervision regularly throughout the year.

### **Managing Risk**

Why risk assess?

Across the Early Years environment, we aim to offer a wide range of exciting and engaging learning opportunities to help develop children’s foundation skills. In any situation where there are a number of children, working and playing together there are risks but there are also benefits. We take the health and safety of children very seriously and assess each situation by considering the potential risks and the benefits and then through discussion we can decide if the risks can be managed appropriately and that the benefits are valid, reasonable and productive in moving children’s learning forward.

Our risk assessments cover the main areas of the indoor and outdoor environment. A general checklist covers our daily considerations before opening up the environment to parents and children. Toileting, first aid and safeguarding are covered by whole-school policies available on the school website. Trips are covered separately using whole-school risk benefit assessment forms and are agreed on a trip-by-trip basis by the Headteacher.

See Risk-Benefit Assessment 2022-2023 for full details of risk assessments in place.

All risk assessments are reviewed yearly to ensure they are up-to-date and relevant however, an assessment will be made immediately if there is an incident or an area of the environment is adapted or changed in any significant way.

**Safe Sleep and rest procedures**

**‘Sleeping children must be frequently checked** to ensure that they are safe. Being safe includes ensuring that cots/bedding are in good condition and suited to the age of the child, and that infants are placed down to sleep safely in line with latest government safety guidance’ Statutory Requirements EYFS 2024 (3.69)

Every child’s needs are different so we provide flexibility and opportunities for children to take naps and rest as they need and regard it to be highly important part of their personal and developmental need.

A sleep mat is available in Nursery and Reception, should a child need to sleep. This mat has safe sleep guidance attached and parents are informed if their child falls asleep in school

**Monitoring**

Staff will check the sleeping children to ensure they are sleeping in a safe position and not face down. The child’s breathing will be checked by placing a gentle hand on the child’s chest or putting the back of their hand near the child’s mouth to feel for breath every 10 minutes  
Staff will ensure they are not hot or cold

**Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS**

This checklist lists the policies and procedures for the EYFS Statutory Framework.

| Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS | Where it can be found                    |
|--|--|
| Safeguarding policy and procedures         | Child protection and Safeguarding policy |
| Procedure for responding to illness        | See First Aid Policy                     |



|   |  |
|---|--|
| Administering medicine policy   | See First Aid Policy   |
| Emergency evacuation procedure  | See Fire Evacuation Policy   |
| Procedure for checking the identity of visitors                             | See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy                       |
| Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children | See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Attendance Policy |
| Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints                          | See Complaints Policy  |