



# Holgate Primary and Nursery School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

### April 2026

At Holgate, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

Frequency of Review: Yearly

Reviewed and Approved by: The Governing Body

Date: April 2027

Date of Next Review: Spring term 2027

Reviewer: Sarah Bacon (HP Early Years Leader)

Signed:  Rebecca Jackson

Date: 12.05.2026

## **Introduction**

This policy outlines the provision at Holgate Primary & Nursery School offered to all its pupils aged from 2 year olds to five years. Children within this age range are taught in The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This policy is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2025.

## **Our aims**

Our school is a place where everyone is treated equally, encouraged, and respected. We believe that all children should be able to achieve their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally. We are committed to our school being a safe and inclusive place where learning is nurtured and encouraged in a happy, caring, and fun environment. We all work for our school to be a happy place where good behaviour is expected, and all children enjoy their educational journey. At Holgate Primary School & Nursery we believe in nothing but the best!

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and learning and teaching is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. The EYFS is based upon four key principles of the Characteristics of Effective Learning.



## **Effective Early Years Education**

Effective Early Years education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and can implement the curriculum requirements effectively.

At Holgate we believe that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Therefore, practitioners ensure that all children feel included, secure, and valued with their individual needs being met. Early years' experience and learning builds on what the children already know, are interested in and can do. No child is ever disadvantaged, and individual needs are always included in planning and provision. Parents and practitioners work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and parents are welcomed into the setting on a regular basis to share information and celebrate the children's achievements.

## **Play and Exploration**

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.” (“Early Years Foundation Stage” Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007).

To be effective, the Early Years Curriculum is carefully structured (recognising different starting points; relevant to levels of need). In our collaboration opportunities are created for children to engage in activities planned by adults (teacher led) and those that they plan or initiate for themselves (child-initiated activities) in order to progress and develop. Practitioners provide quality interactions and observations, to identify levels of achievement, interest and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning and next steps. (see Appendix 2)

Well planned, purposeful activities and appropriate interventions by staff ensure children within the setting are engaged in the learning process. A mixture of real objects, ICT and photographs are used to stimulate children’s understanding and all learning styles are catered for. To ensure children have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment is well planned and well organised and is reviewed regularly to suit the children’s interests and ever-changing needs and development. Enhanced provision challenge cards are placed within the environment to support and challenge children’s “play” during child-initiated time and to ensure a depth and purpose to their activities.

*“The new Statutory Framework clearly states that each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and a mixture of adult led and child-initiated activities. Furthermore, it is stated that play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others”*

At Holgate we strongly believe that effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by committed and caring staff.

## **Assessment and Record keeping.**

At Holgate, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning and provision. Staff also use information shared by parents about any experiences the children might have outside of school, along with the individual child’s interest.

When a child is aged **between 2 and 4**, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child’s development in the 3 prime areas. This ‘progress check’ highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

In addition to this all learning is captured through floor books, Class dojo stories, English, phonics and Maths books. This enables staff to assess and plan for the next steps for individual children. But also provides the parents with a well-rounded picture of their child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

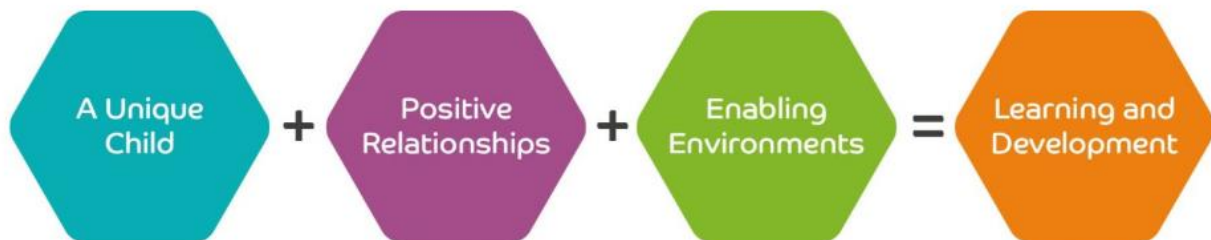
At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority, at the end of the school year. Summative assessments are continual throughout the year.

### **The Role of the adult**



- Question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking
- Extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- Encourage independence
- Add resources that stimulate, motivate and engage the learner
- Demonstrate, model and work alongside the children
- Help children to see links in their learning
- Support and encourage the children
- Encourage children to be problem solvers, problem setters and investigators • Re-direct the play if necessary
- Help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- Promote children's well-being
- Observe and assess learning
- Record judgments and plan for next steps in learning
- Provide feedback to child/other adult/parents
- Ensure the environment is safe and secure and that the Welfare Requirements are in place

## The Seven Areas of Learning

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2025 EYFS statutory framework. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected sections. 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.

Prime Areas	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Making Relationships
	Sense of Self
	Understanding Feelings
Physical Development	Moving and handling
	Health and Self-care
Communication and Language	Listening and Attention
	Understanding
	Speaking

Specific Areas	
Literacy	Reading
	Writing
Mathematics	Mathematics
Understanding the World	People and Communities
	The World
	Technology
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials
	Being Imaginative and Expressive

## Characteristics of Effective Learning

We uphold the view that learning is underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The 3 characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

All of these areas interlink throughout the curriculum and adults make the most of opportunities to interact with children to develop their playing, thinking and learning. Adults also recognise that there are times when they need to take a step back to enable children to think critically and solve a problem by trial and error or perseverance.

It is our aim that children leave the EYFS with:

- a positive 'can do' attitude to learning
- a willingness to take risks and make mistakes
- high levels of engagement in a task where they can practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills
- perseverance
- a love of learning
- ideas of their own, that they can plan and follow through
- an ability to express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

## **Planning**

The half-termly planning for our curriculum vehicle combines the seven areas of learning with skills and experiences essential for the development of the holistic child. Opportunities to recover past learning as well as new experiences enable flexibility for individualised provision and the nurturing of children's development to work towards a final outcome. The use of visitors, parental engagement sessions, trips and other enrichment adds an additional layer to the learning of the children across the collaboration, supporting links to real life experiences such as occupations, the local area and 'awe and wonder' around them.

Detailed weekly plans are created to support the teaching of Phonics, English and Maths, using Monster Phonics, White Rose maths and Transcription to create a systematic and thorough coverage of these subjects.

Children in F1 (Nursery) are taught Monster Phonics, Pre-phase 2 phonics, covering all 7 aspects over 3 terms. Children in F2 follow the Monster Phonics scheme which focuses on grapheme recognition, blending and segmenting skills and introduced High Frequency words which together allows children to read and write sentences by the end of the Foundation stage.

Long Term planning is created over a 2-year cycle. This planning ensures a broad and balanced approach to the EYFS curriculum, along with ensuring the foundations are laid for the next step into Key Stage 1. Overviews of Vehicle, Maths, Reading and phonics are used to ensure coverage and a consistent progressive approach across the collaboration.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Effective teaching and learning is supported through:

- Partnership between staff and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement.
- Knowledge staff have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching provision.
- Range of approaches provided to give first-hand experiences, clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play through talk or other means of communication.
- Carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their own interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social, and emotional abilities.
- Encouraging children to communicate and talk about their learning, the development of children's independence and self-management.

- Support for learning provided, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities, and equipment, both indoors and outdoors, including the effective use of technology.
- Identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents, through daily conversations, written reports, and parents' meetings.

### **Celebrating and rewarding.**

Across the collaboration we use 'Class Dojo' to reward good behaviour and achievement both in school and at home. Children attend a weekly celebration 'mentions' assembly highlighting children who have impressed in specific areas. Alongside this half termly Golden Letters home, attendance trips and End of Year Graduation ceremony.

### **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within our school. All children within the collaboration are treated fairly and all children and their families are valued and celebrated within our school. We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

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

### **Special Educational Needs**

Continual informal and formal assessments undertaken by staff provide opportunities to identify any special educational needs a child may have. Children identified with special educational needs are monitored and initial concerns are discussed with parents, SENCO, and advice may be sought from other agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Service. In the Foundation Stage we give all children the opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of their range of life experiences, and abilities when planning for their learning.

### **Relationships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community**

We know what an important role parents/carers play in their children's learning journey, and we aim to involve them as much as possible in school life. We recognise the huge contribution that parents make to their child's learning, and we work hard to develop and sustain links with parents. We seek to start building relationships with parents from the term before their child starts school, through clear communication and the initial visits and information sessions. We do this in a range of different ways, which range from communication with home to inviting parents into the school setting.

These include:

- Introductory sessions
- Stay and play sessions transition sessions
- Reading books shared between home and school
- Weekly Facebook posts
- Parent workshops
- Parental engagement sessions
- Parents consultations

Working with other services, organisations and the local community is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible. We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings, for example to the local post office, and inviting members of the community into our setting.

### **Safety**

We believe children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure. A child's safety and welfare is paramount to us. We create a safe, secure and welcoming environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies in place to safeguard children and daily procedures are in place to encourage children to operate in safe ways and to keep them safe. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

### **Equal Opportunities**

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by considering our children's wide range of life experiences when planning for their learning. All areas of provision will be made accessible to all children. We value the diversity of individuals and families within the collaboration.

### **Safeguarding**

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be noted and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance. The Children Protection and Safeguarding Policy is available for parents on the school website.

### **Transition**

At Holgate we work closely with the local pre-schools to ensure that we have detailed information about the children prior to them starting school. Early Years teachers observe some of the children in their pre-school settings and we invite the children to join us for transition sessions in the summer term. These include sessions for just parents, followed by 2 further session whereby the parents and children are invited to stay and play within the nursery and Reception classrooms.

As the children prepare to enter KS1, the Year 1 teachers work with the F2 teachers to discuss the end of year data in order to ensure a smooth transition into Year 1. These discussions help the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. The children will also spend time with their new teacher in the Year 1 classroom.



## Role of Parents/Carers

**The Foundation Stage team strongly believe that developing an effective working partnership with parents/carers has a positive impact on children's development and learning.**

We value parents/carers by:

- showing respect and understanding for the role of parents/carers as children's first educators.
- encouraging parents/carers to share observations of their child's development and any concerns they may have and to provide support for them in partnership where appropriate. Eg wow stars, conversations, photographs, cheeky challenges, reading challenges
- providing a welcoming environment by being approachable and friendly.
- establishing an atmosphere of trust and confidence.
- inviting parents/carers to regular meetings to share information about their children and about our school.
- sharing information about their child's progress, development and the curriculum through regular meetings, reports and newsletters/leaflets home
- providing opportunities for parents/carers to attend social events with children eg Easter egg hunts, Mother's Day afternoon tea etc
- inviting parents/carers into the classroom to share expertise/interests.
- Encouraging parents to be involved in their child's learning through creative homework, weekend books etc
- encouraging home school links through support with the home school reading programme.
- inviting them to assemblies and other whole school events
- inviting them to become involved in the P.T.A / FSR which supports the school in fund raising and organises social events for adults and children.
- being available at the beginning and end of the day to talk to parents/carers on an informal basis. If further time is needed to discuss particular issues appointments are usually arranged for meeting at another time that is mutually convenient to allow more privacy.

# Play

Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors is one of the key ways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. It is not just imaginative play and role play but includes spontaneous, self-initiated lines of inquiry and exploration. Play is a vital component of children's lives. It is an important way skills are developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, behavioural and social development.

## Principles of High Quality Play

- Play is an intrinsic part of children's learning and development.
- Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes.
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth.
- Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to experiment, practice and master what is new.
- Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas, and materials, connections and consequences.
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
- Play enables children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
- Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners.
- Play can be supported and extended but not interfered with by adults.
- Play should present no barriers to children because of their language, culture, ability, physicality or gender.

## Role of the adult

- To observe child-initiated play to understand and provide for their interests and needs.
- To plan and resource a challenging indoor and outdoor environment.
- To support children's learning through planned play activity.
- To extend and support children's spontaneous/self-initiated play.
- To extend and develop children's language and communication in their play.