



PROSPECT HOUSE
SCHOOL

EYFS POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2025

EYFS POLICY

We are committed to providing a high quality Early Years education that gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life "

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2025

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other policies of the school including

- Safeguarding
- Curriculum
- Reading
- Accessibility
- Behaviour
- Toileting
- Digital Usage
- Attendance
- The EYFS Handbook
- EYFS Qualifications

Please also read

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2025)
- Development Matters 2023
- Montessori Theory
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) within the school provides for children aged between 3 to 5 years. Children are admitted following their third birthday (Nursery) or their fourth birthday (Reception).

The school is a non-registered setting.



For all EYFS children aged from three until 31 August following their fifth birthday, both the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2025) and the Independent School Standards (2014) apply, including the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

The EYFS curriculum within the school has been designed to incorporate the learning requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage alongside elements of the Montessori philosophy and the Curiosity Approach.

Aims of the EYFS

The school seeks to

- provide a happy, caring, secure and stimulating learning environment to support and extend children's development and learning to enable them to fulfil their potential
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that offers opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play
- have good relationships with parents and carers, where they feel valued and are able to actively contribute to and participate in school life
- encourage confidence, independence and a desire to learn
- focus on the development of every child as an individual, valuing and building on their previous experiences and responding to their individual needs to ensure that every child is included and supported
- promote and celebrate achievement across all areas of the EYFS curriculum
- equality of opportunity for all children, staff and parents

The overarching principles of the EYFS are that

- every child is unique
- positive relationships are crucial
- children require enabling environments
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

The aim of the Montessori philosophy within the school is to view each child as unique and that within each child lies a hidden potential. For this potential to be unlocked, the school needs

- to give children the opportunities to develop trust and autonomy.
- to nurture confidence, self-esteem and courage, enabling the child to embrace new challenges, take risks and act with initiative.

Young children joining the school in the EYFS will have had a wide range of different experiences. As a result, they will have a variety of skills and interests and will need a well-planned and resourced curriculum to make optimum progress.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

At Prospect House School, we incorporate the Curiosity Approach as a pedagogical framework alongside our Montessori philosophy. The Curiosity Approach champions a child-led, play-based learning environment that uses authentic, natural, and open-ended resources to inspire wonder, curiosity, and deep engagement.

Authentic Resources and Everyday Living

We provide children with real-life, authentic resources that connect them to the world around them. Rather than relying solely on plastic toys, we also offer natural materials such as wood, metal, fabric and ceramics. These resources support activities of everyday living, and children engage in real tasks such as

- Pouring water from jugs into glasses
- Preparing snacks using real utensils and crockery
- Caring for plants and the environment
- Washing and cleaning using real tools
- Folding cloths and sorting natural materials
- Sweeping, dusting and tidying their environment
- Polishing objects and caring for classroom materials

These practical life skills develop fine motor control, concentration, independence, and self-confidence whilst giving children a sense of purpose and belonging. Through these meaningful activities, children learn to care for themselves, others, and their environment.

Awe and Wonder

We create environments that provoke curiosity and invite exploration. Our learning spaces feature carefully curated provocations using natural and interesting objects that encourage children to question, investigate and discover. We value the process of learning over the end product, allowing children time and space to explore at their own pace.

Loose Parts Play

Open-ended materials with no fixed purpose allow children to use their imagination and creativity. Loose parts such as pebbles, shells, wooden blocks, fabric pieces, and natural materials can be combined, moved and transformed in endless ways, supporting problem-solving, mathematical thinking, and creative expression.

Calm, Uncluttered Spaces

We believe that less is more. Our learning environment is thoughtfully organised with neutral tones, natural light, and carefully selected resources displayed accessibly. This creates a calm atmosphere that allows children to focus, make choices, and engage deeply with their learning.

Connection to Nature

We recognise the importance of connecting children with the natural world. Daily outdoor experiences, natural materials indoors, and opportunities to care for living things help children develop respect for their environment and an understanding of the world around them.

The Curiosity Approach complements our Montessori provision by emphasising independence, respect for the child, and the carefully prepared environment. Both approaches share a commitment to following the child's interests, supporting practical life skills and fostering a lifelong love of learning through hands-on, meaningful experiences

The curriculum for the EYFS underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering and developing children's individual needs alongside promoting a lifelong love of learning.

There are seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS Development Matters Guidance.

The prime areas are

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

The four specific areas of learning which strengthen the prime areas are

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

None of these areas of learning and development can be delivered in isolation. They are equally important and interdependent in the support of a rounded approach to child development. All areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The focus in the EYFS is on a child-centred approach with the understanding that all children progress at different rates.

They are set out in the Development Matters Guidance as follows:

Communication and language

This is at the heart of learning. A language rich environment where children are constantly involved in natural conversations to develop their speaking, listening and understanding is paramount. Children are exposed to quality literature and exciting story telling methods through drama and role play. Careful questioning gives children the opportunity to express themselves, sequence their ideas, and explain their thoughts. Children's learning and competence in communicating, speaking and listening and beginning to read and write will be supported and extended. They will be provided with opportunity and encouragement to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes and will be supported to develop the confidence and disposition to do so.

Physical Development

Physical development will be encouraged through the provision of opportunities for children to be active and interactive and to improve their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. They will be supported in using all their senses to learn about the world around them and to make connections between new information and what they already know. They will be supported in developing an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food. Dental hygiene is a focus now in the new curriculum and this is supported through fun activities, stories and visits from a dentist.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children will be provided with experiences and support, which will help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others, respect others, form positive relationships, build their social skills, understand appropriate behaviour, learn to manage their feelings and develop a positive disposition to learn. Providers will ensure support for children's emotional well-being to help them to know themselves and what they can do.

Literacy

Developing a lifelong love of reading is crucial to development. This begins through songs, rhymes, poems, drama and listening to stories, and later progresses to blending sounds together to decode words. Comprehension is built through questioning and exploration of a text. Children are encouraged to make marks using different materials and tools. Even though a mark may not seem recognisable, to the child it could carry meaning and is celebrated. As children progress, they are exposed to letters and sounds and correct letter formation and implement what they learn through fun and purposeful challenges. Children will be supported to link sounds to letters and begin to read and write. They will be given access to a wide range of phonic and sight reading material, including poetry, fiction and non-fiction materials to ignite their interest.

Mathematics

It is essential to develop a strong understanding of numbers so children can excel mathematically. Understanding the relationship between numbers occurs through counting, games, songs and fingerplays, and opportunities in play to do things like adding one more or one less. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding, children develop a secure base of mathematical knowledge and vocabulary. Rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. Children will be supported in developing their understanding and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding.



Understanding the World

Children will be supported in developing the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of their physical world and community. Their learning will be supported through offering opportunities for them to observe, explore and celebrate a range of religious festivals, encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real-life situations; undertake practical 'experiments', and work with a range of materials. Children will use and develop an understanding of a variety of technological toys and equipment and their use in the modern world.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. Children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. Children cut, join, build, stick, mould, and experiment with both 2D and 3D creations. Music and dance is encouraged thus building self expression and confidence. Dramatic play allows children to 'try on' every day roles in the community or create an imaginative scene with their friends. These opportunities develop social skills, language and social understanding.

Planning, Recording and Assessing

Planning

The revised Development Matters non-statutory guidance is used to guide planning. Thorough planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. It enables staff to build up knowledge about how individual children learn and make progress. It also provides opportunities for us to think and talk about how to sustain a successful learning environment. This process works best when parallel class teachers in the EYFS plan together.

Plans are flexible enough to adapt to all children's interests and experiences, regardless of ability level and inclusive of those with additional needs. There are different topics used every half term as a basis for planning and guides weekly planning. Montessori activities are all presented to the children regularly and are accessible within provision. The weekly timetable also includes a dedicated forest school session as well as specialist teaching including music, French, sports and PE.

The EYFS learning and development comprises of The Development Matters and Early Learning Goals—the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five.

The three main characteristics of effective teaching and planning are

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Organised visits are planned, and authorised visitors are invited into the classroom to enrich different topics across the year.

Recording Information

The children are observed in both adult-led and child-initiated tasks in the environment and these are recorded on the online platform Tapestry. Individual observations are also carried out so that each child's progress is documented and the next steps to take the individual child's learning forward can be made. Observations are shared with parents every half term, and parents are also encouraged to add their own observations to the platform. Formative class notes are taken by teachers during adult-led tasks. Writing samples are taken every term and kept in the 'golden writing' book. Children have a "busy book" or "topic book". Displays are interactive and reflect the process of children's learning as well as the end product.

Assessment (also see Assessment Policy)

On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Teachers must ensure that they observe children and respond appropriately to help them make progress. Assessments are based on practitioners' observations of what children are doing in their day-to-day activities. Judgments are made on observational evidence gathered from a wide range of learning and teaching contexts. All adults who interact and actively work with the child make contributions to this assessment and information provided by parents will also form a vital part of this process.

The information gathered is used for discussion during regular staff meetings, short reports, parent/teacher meetings and for future planning and target setting. Children in Reception complete QUEST baseline assessments for CLL, Maths, Phonics and wellbeing in the autumn and summer terms.

An in-house baseline assessment is also currently done on entry into Nursery and Reception for all areas of learning. This is done by autumn half term. A 'key skills' spreadsheet is kept to record this information throughout the year and reflects self care, specific sound and number recognition and counting skills, among other skills. An 'overview' table is also kept to show children's progress in each developmental area. This is entered into at pivotal points in the year for both Reception and Nursery. Children are said to be working 'below expectation', 'at expectation' or 'above expectation' at various stages throughout the year, rather than tracking through 'age bands', or creating something similar.

For Reception, this leads into the EYFS Profile being completed at the end of Reception, which is submitted to the Borough. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 early learning goals, and children are said to be emerging into the goal or working at the expected level.

They are as follows:

Communication and Language

ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

ELG: Speaking



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

ELG: Self-Regulation

ELG: Managing Self

ELG: Building Relationships

Physical Development

ELG: Gross Motor Skills

ELG: Fine Motor Skills

Literacy

ELG: Comprehension

ELG: Word Reading

ELG: Writing

Mathematics

ELG: Number

ELG: Numerical Patterns

Understanding the World

ELG: Past and Present

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

ELG: The Natural World

Expressive Arts and Design

ELG: Creating with Materials

ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

SEN including Able, Gifted & Talented (Also see SEN Policy and Able, Gifted and Talented Policy, Accessibility Policy)

It is recognised that there are children of differing ability in all classes, and so suitable learning opportunities are provided for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. This is achieved through a range of strategies which can include

- Setting common tasks in provision that are open-ended and can have a variety of responses
- Setting individual challenges to stretch the more able
- Grouping children by ability and setting for phonics teaching
- Providing a range of challenges with different resources
- Using additional adults to support the work of individual children or small groups

Children with Education, Health and Care Plans or specific learning difficulties will have their needs assessed and, if appropriate, an IEP will be implemented. The school works closely with outside agencies, where appropriate, to support children who require speech and language therapy, occupational therapy or intervention from other professionals.

The school's SEND coordinator regularly visits the Lower School to observe children in the EYFS and support teachers with their provision for individuals.



EAL (also see EAL Policy)

All EAL children are assessed in English. Various teaching methods are used to ensure that children with English as an additional language are able to access the curriculum. An intervention program may be used if it is appropriate for the individual child.

British Values

British values are implicit within the daily routines and in the PSED and Understanding the World planning and activities, alongside wellbeing sessions. These fundamental British values are delivered in an age appropriate manner and link to the school's values.

Supervision and Training of staff

Early Years staff undertake appropriate training and professional development to ensure they can continually improve the quality learning and development experiences they offer for children. The concept of 'supervision' is a way for staff to discuss issues and identify solutions as well as receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness. Supervision meetings happen regularly/as needed between the Head of Lower School and each staff member, including teaching assistants, in order to support their role working with children and their families. This can be in addition to regular staff appraisals and other opportunities for staff training to take place. The EYFS team join whole school training events and have team meetings to focus on EYFS topics, for example observation and continuous provision.

Staffing Ratios

The staff ratios follow the guidance in the EYFS Statutory Framework as a minimum (see EYFS staffing qualifications). Please see the EYFS qualifications staff list which details qualifications including first aid and food handling. No one under the age of 17 is included in ratios.

Safeguarding and welfare (See policies including Safeguarding, Whistle blowing, Digital usage, Staff code of conduct, Behaviour, Medical and EYFS induction pack documents)

The Statutory Framework states: *"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. The safeguarding and welfare requirements are designed to help providers create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence. Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well."* (Statutory Framework 3.1-3.2)

Our safeguarding policies and procedures are transparent, clear, and easy to understand for staff, pupils, parents, and carers. Systems are in place, and they are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report any form of abuse or neglect, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.

Our safeguarding policy includes

- Information on safer recruitment procedures, including that references must be obtained before employing any new member of staff
- Procedures to follow up on child absence promptly

- Clear whistleblowing procedures for all staff to raise safeguarding concerns, outlining when and how to report concerns and the process that will be followed afterwards
- How safeguarding training is delivered and how practitioners are supported to put this into practice
- That staff are aware of whistleblowing procedures, feel able to raise concerns and trust that concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team

The school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and team that takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding children. The name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies can be found on posters displayed around the school buildings and in the school's Safeguarding Policy.

All practitioners are trained in line with the criteria for effective training set out in Annex C of the EYFS Statutory Framework (September 2025), and practitioners are supported and confident in applying safeguarding policies and procedures. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction and have regular updates.

First Aid

All early years staff, complete a Paediatric First Aid certificate. PFA training must be renewed every three years. Procedures are in place to ensure parents are informed of accidents involving their child.

Attendance

The school must follow up on absences promptly. If a child is absent for a prolonged time or without notice from the parent/carer, the school will attempt to contact the child's parents/carers and emergency contacts.

The school has an attendance policy that is shared with parents/carers. It includes expectations for reporting child absences and the actions the school will take if a child is absent without notification, or for a prolonged period of time. This policy is available on request.

Wherever reasonably possible, the school holds more than two emergency contact numbers for each child.

Safer Eating (*please also see Allergy Policy*)

Where children are provided with meals and snacks, the school has regard for the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance.

Before admitting a child into the setting, the school obtains information on special dietary needs, preferences, allergies and intolerances, and health special requirements. This information is shared with all staff involved in food preparation and handling. At every snack/mealtime, staff are clear on who is responsible for checking the food provided meets every child's requirements.

The school regularly consults with parents/carers to

- Create allergy action plans for managing known allergies/intolerances with health professionals, keep this information up to date and share it with all staff

- Discuss the child's progress with solid foods

Food is prepared in a way that

- Prevents choking; in the event of a choking incident, details are recorded and parents/carers are made aware
- Meets each child's individual developmental needs

Risk assessment

Outings (also see Educational visits, exchanges & trips)

A risk assessment (in writing) is undertaken for all outings, and includes consideration of adult-to-child ratios and the steps to be taken to remove, minimise and manage identified risks and hazards.

Equal Opportunities (also see Equal Opportunities Policy)

We are committed to an environment that promotes equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their race, colour, gender and religion, and any work undertaken reflects this commitment. Children with Education, Health and Care Plans or specific learning difficulties will have their needs assessed and, if appropriate, an IEP will be devised (also see the SENDA and Accessibility plan).

Communication with parents

Communication with parents is extremely important to each child's development. Parents are encouraged to use the message book system for routine correspondence. These are checked and signed each morning by the class teacher. Parents also receive additional information through parental handbooks, the school website, circulars, weekly newsletter, twitter, parents evenings and open events. Parents may also make an appointment with staff and senior staff at any mutually convenient time. Staff may also request additional meetings with parents if necessary. Observations are shared with parents every half term, and they are also invited to share their own observations of their children on Tapestry with staff.

Induction

We have compiled a comprehensive induction programme for those starting in the Nursery and Reception. Our induction procedures enable children and parents to have a successful and enjoyable start to school life. We ensure that parents are provided with detailed information in good time, enabling them to feel confident about the transition process. Induction includes the following:

We offer each family the opportunity of a home visit by their new class teacher and Head of Lower School. These visits enable us to meet families in a familiar and relaxed setting and it provide the opportunity to discuss any individual concerns or queries. Additionally, it will allow the teacher a wonderful opportunity to learn more about each child.

The school holds several welcome events for new pupils and their parents at the Lower School in the lead up to starting in the Early Years . These include

- taster and settling days
- moving up day and induction mornings
- meet the Headteacher events
- Teddy Bears Picnic in spring (open to all families and the community)

- Curriculum talk and 'stay and play' session

The Headmistress, Head of Lower School and other senior staff members as well as relevant staff are present.

We speak with all parents on an individual basis and ensure that each child is comfortable as they start school, and use different approaches when necessary.

