



GORSLEY GOFFS PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY

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The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception year (0-5 years). As Gorsley Goffs, children begin Reception at the start of the academic year in which they turn five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

1. A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
2. Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming confident and independent.
3. 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
4. Learning and developing – an acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

In the EYFS we aim to provide:

- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning, building on what children already know and can do
- A structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- A secure foundation of knowledge through the children experiencing a broad and balanced curriculum
- A strong partnership with parents and carers
- Equal opportunities for all children
- A rich, safe, and stimulating environment where children feel happy, secure and valued and are able to share their feelings and concerns.

Curriculum:

The Early Years curriculum covers 7 areas of learning and development leading up to 17 Early Learning Goals which set out what is expected of most children by the end of their Reception year.

Prime Areas	Early Learning Goals
1. Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding
	Speaking
2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-Regulation
	Managing Self
	Building Relationships
3. Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills
	Fine Motor Skills
Specific Areas	
4. Literacy	Comprehension
	Word Reading
	Writing
5. Mathematics	Number
	Numerical Patterns
6. Understanding the World	Past and Present
	People, Culture and Communities
	The Natural World
7. Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials
	Being Imaginative and Expressive

The teaching in the EYFS also encourages 3 characteristics of effective learning which underpin learning and development in all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner:

Characteristics of Effective Learning

1. Playing and exploring – engagement	Finding out and exploring
	Playing with what they know
	Being willing to “have a go”
2. Active learning – motivation	Being involved and concentrating
	Keeping trying
	Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
3. Creating and thinking critically	Having their own ideas
	Making links
	Choosing ways to do things

Practitioners reflect on these characteristics of effective learning and ensure that the classroom stimulates “playing and exploring, active learning, creativity and thinking critically.”

Planning and Organisation

Planning is based around the seven areas of learning using the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Sept. 2025). Learning outcomes are cross-referenced to the activities planned, ensuring a comprehensive progression towards the Early Learning Goals while providing opportunities for teacher assessment through both structured activities and child-led continuous provision.

Our aim is for the children to become independent learners over the course of the Foundation Stage. Activities are planned to provide a stimulating learning experience for the children where they can explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. Children’s own needs, interests and learning styles are always taken into account.

Plans are developed to ensure:

- There is strong evidence of cross-curricular links and hands-on learning wherever possible.
- There is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.
- Children work in a variety of ways: independently, in groups or pairs and as a whole class.
- All children have access to the areas of learning both inside and outside the classroom
- Learning and development opportunities are planned around the needs and interests of the children and are assessed and reviewed constantly

Play in the EYFS:

Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

Resources:

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects individuals’ interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as this encourages independent learning.

The teaching of reading and writing:

- Phonics is taught daily from the start of the Autumn Term, using “Read, Write Inc” resources

- Initially, Reception children learn one new phoneme every day and take home practise sheets to form part of a programme of integrated learning between school and home.
- As soon as enough sounds have been learned, children will develop their skills of decoding and encoding, practising reading and writing simple words.
- Alongside this, children will be introduced to key words which they will practise in school and take home for extra reinforcement.
- Early reading in the first half of the Autumn Term includes sharing picture books with adults. Children will not begin to read and progress through reading scheme books until the 2nd half of the Autumn term and only then, if they are deemed ready by the classroom teacher.

Assessment:

Statutory Baseline Assessment is carried out within the first 6 weeks of the Autumn Term. These assessment activities allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children as well as groups of children.

The collection of assessment data forming the “Foundation Stage Profile” (FSP) is a statutory requirement. The FSP is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils’ progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Every child is assessed termly against the seven areas of learning and development and these levels are then recorded as being “On Track” or “Working Towards”. During the summer term, each Reception child’s level of development is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals. The FSP indicates whether children are meeting ‘expected’ levels of development, or if they have not yet reached expected levels (‘emerging’). At the end of the Reception year, if children have met the ‘expected’ level of development in the 3 prime areas of learning (communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; and physical development) and in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics, they are assessed as having achieved a ‘Good Level of Development’ (GLD).

In line with the Foundation Stage ethos most assessment is formative. This is ongoing and carried out by the teacher and teaching assistants who work in close partnership. Anecdotal evidence, contributed by parents and other adults in the school is considered valuable assessment material and may be used to inform future planning. Some summative teacher assessment is carried out by way of observation, either 1-1 with pupils or in small groups.

Information about progress is shared with parents on a termly basis, in the form of parent consultation meetings (in the Autumn and Spring terms) and in the written end-of-year report (in the Summer Term).

Parents as Partners

Throughout the year, we use “SeeSaw”, an online learning journal that includes observations, pictures and videos. Parents are encouraged to log on to view their child’s learning journal, comment/like pictures and add their own annotated pictures and videos should they wish to do so.

We recognise the role that parents and carers will have already played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- Asking parents to tell us about their child’s experiences before they start school (in the form of an “All About Me” booklet).
- Trying to visit all children either in their home setting or childcare provision prior to them starting school (where possible).

- Giving the children and parents the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transition play sessions.
- Inviting Reception parents to an induction meeting prior to their children starting school.
- Providing Literacy Support in the form of a video uploaded onto the school website, to explain the school's approach to teaching early reading and writing skills.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Providing each child with a book in which to communicate daily messages.
- Inviting parents to a formal meeting twice a year at which the teacher and the parents discuss the child's progress.
- Providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Ensuring that staff in the EYFS provide a range of opportunities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, school and parents/carers such as stay and play sessions, class assemblies, school visits, and curriculum evenings.

Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access to the Foundation Stage curriculum and resources, regardless of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-cultural society.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEND)

All children and their families are valued at Gorsley Goffs. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of sources, to ensure that any child with a potential special educational need is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and appropriate steps are then taken in accordance with the school's SEN Code of Practice.

Health and Safety

Within our school, there are clear procedures for assessing risk which include procedures for keeping children safe both at school and during off-site activities. Resources and spaces are checked regularly to ensure that they are safe to use.

Children's medical and dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required. Fresh drinking water is available at all times. Children are offered fruit and milk at specific times during the day.

(See whole school Health & Safety Policy for further details).

Safeguarding

In accordance with current legislation for all schools, should any concerns arise regarding child protection – including radicalisation - then we will seek advice from the appropriate authority. All staff have received statutory Child Protection training and follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (see separate policy).