Shakespeare Primary School

EYFS Policy and Practice

2026-2027

Statutory Requirements ratified by Shakespeare Primary School Governors in January 2026 and reviewed in September 2026. EYFS Statutory Requirements due for ratification by the Governing Body in January 2027.

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1. The best for every child

A curriculum of excellence from the heart of Leeds

The Shakespeare 'Curriculum of Excellence from the Heart of Leeds' prepares children to understand and influence the world in which they live.

It is an exciting, dynamic and experiential curriculum, with a focus on securing a deep understanding of relevant knowledge and skills. It places a strong emphasis on developing excellent foundational skills in English and mathematics, while also developing children's understanding of the positive role they can play in shaping the world around them.

As a school in the heart of Leeds, we want our children to contribute to:

- Building a community founded on respect, understanding and tolerance.
- Developing connections between communities locally, nationally and globally.
- Creating a society in which people are active citizens who care for the environment and their neighbours.
- Making Leeds a safe, clean and green city.
- Improving their physical and mental wellbeing by taking an active and informed role in their personal development.

Our curriculum will support children to become collaborative, resilient learners who take increasing responsibility for their learning as they move through school. Woven throughout the curriculum are our Golden Themes, which teach the knowledge, values and qualities children need to become responsible citizens, make positive choices and thrive.

A central intention is for all children to become excellent readers. High-quality books, chosen for their content, relevant themes and issues, and diverse and relatable characters, will be used to inspire a love of reading. Reading skills are prioritised because they enable children to succeed across all areas of the curriculum.

Our curriculum will also enable children to develop their individual talents. Through carefully chosen projects, exemplary teaching and strong partnerships, children will have opportunities to develop creative, sporting, artistic and academic excellence.

Our Early Years approach

At Shakespeare Primary School and Nursery, we believe that high-quality early learning experiences provide the foundations for future success. In our Foundation Stage, we create an enriched environment where children feel secure and happy and can access motivating, challenging learning experiences tailored to the life experiences of our unique cohorts.

We value every child as an individual. We follow children's interests and respond to their needs to provide personalised learning opportunities that promote strong progress and development. We maintain high expectations for every child, whatever their starting point.

We place great value on parents' and carers' contributions to children's learning and work in partnership with families to secure the best possible outcomes for all children.

2. High-quality care

Health and safety

All practitioners in the Foundation Stage promote a safe and healthy environment for every child. We model and encourage healthy eating, physical activity and respectful behaviour.

Fresh fruit or vegetables, milk and water are provided for children in both Nursery and Reception. Reception classrooms have a designated snack area where children can access snacks independently. In Nursery, children enjoy snack time alongside practitioners, who model healthy eating practices. Practitioners regularly remind children that a snack is available and encourage them to wash their hands before eating. Oral hygiene is promoted throughout the Early Years, with children learning about its importance from their earliest experiences in the Nursery Den and Hive.

We promote a safe and happy learning environment through our Golden Rules, which link specific expectations to familiar characters. These rules are modelled and reinforced through daily classroom routines. All practitioners model consistent behavioural expectations and boundaries. The Behaviour and Pastoral Manager is Lisa Smith. Foundation Stage practitioners can also seek support and advice from the Assistant Head for Inclusion. Where a child's behaviour presents additional challenges or risks, an individual risk assessment and Positive Behaviour Plan will be developed to address the child's needs.

To ensure that our environment is safe, secure and ready for learning, daily risk assessments are carried out in all areas accessed by children, including classrooms, outdoor areas and bathrooms. These assessments include checks for broken equipment, plastic bags and loose cords. Staff must read and sign the relevant risk assessment for each area, including the arrangements for space and adult supervision.

All staff must read, understand and sign the 'Doors and Exits' risk assessment, which supports children's safety during transitions. Staff must also follow the 'End of Session Procedure' to ensure that children enter and leave the premises safely.

Before any trip, outing or visit, the visit leader must carry out a preliminary visit and complete a risk assessment covering the journey and destination. The visit leader must provide the Headteacher and Governors with an itinerary, the relevant Leeds City Council risk assessments through Evolve, and any additional school risk assessments required to help keep children safe.

Child protection

All practitioners must have up-to-date child protection training and follow the school's current Child Protection Policy. Staff must remain alert to possible indicators of concern. Any concern must be recorded immediately on a 'Cause for Concern' form and shared only with a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or other appropriate designated safeguarding officer.

All practitioners must be familiar with and follow the relevant statutory safeguarding guidance, including 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. The DSL is Amy Brealey, Deputy Headteacher.

The use of personal mobile phones and cameras is not permitted within the setting. Appropriate signage is displayed inside and outside the classrooms. Staff must store their personal mobile phones in a lockable cupboard during working hours.

All staff must read and understand the school's Intimate Care Policy, which provides guidance on changing and supporting children safely and appropriately. Children who are still in nappies, or who require additional personal care, must have a Personal Care Plan agreed with their parent or carer and Key Person.

Medical incidents, first aid, medication and illness

If a medical incident occurs, a qualified First Aider must be alerted immediately. A member of the Senior Leadership Team should also attend to provide support. The EYFS team has six qualified Paediatric First Aiders, and all Early Years Educators have first aid training.

If an injury is suspected, the member of staff who witnessed the incident must check the child for any injury that may have been sustained, including injuries that are not immediately visible. Staff must adapt their communication to the child's needs if the child is unable to explain what has happened.

Every fall, bump, scrape or other minor accident must be recorded on an accident form and shared with the child's parent or carer on the same day. The Class Teacher or Room Leader must be informed of any incident that occurs during a session. In the event of a head injury, the parent or carer must also be contacted by telephone, and an accident form must be completed. The Class Teacher or Room Leader is responsible for contacting the parent or carer.

Staff must follow the school's procedure for administering medication. Medication may only be administered where it has been prescribed by a doctor and needs to be given at least four times a day. It must be in its original packaging with a prescription label showing the child's name, dosage and expiry date. A parent or carer must complete a medication consent form with a member of staff. Staff must also complete a medicine administration form each time medication is given; this must be countersigned by another member of staff.

Medication must be stored in the medicine cabinet in the Early Years kitchen. Emergency medication must be stored in the medicine cabinet in the toilet area.

Children with specific dietary needs, including allergies, must have an 'Alert' poster displayed in the classroom, snack area and lunch area. All staff working with the child must be informed of the relevant requirements. Allergy risks must also be considered in areas of provision; for example, the use of egg boxes in craft activities may need to be restricted. Children must wear their allergy lanyards at lunchtime.

The school is fully compliant with Benedict's Law. Please refer to the school's Allergy Policy for further information.

Where a child is showing symptoms of a common childhood illness, rather than experiencing a medical incident or accident, staff must refer the matter to the Attendance Officer before the child is sent home.

Ratios

Nursery Den: There is a maximum of 16 children in the morning and 16 in the afternoon. The required ratio is 1:5 for two-year-olds and 1:8 for three-year-olds. A qualified teacher leads the room alongside an Early Years Educator, another Level 3-qualified practitioner and a SEND Learning Support Assistant.

Nursery Hive: The maximum number of children at any one time is 45. A qualified Class Teacher leads the room, supported by an Early Years Educator who is Level 6 qualified. When both are present, the ratio is 1:13 for three-year-olds and 1:5 for two-year-olds. If the Early Years Educator is not present, the ratio for three-year-olds is 1:8. If the Class Teacher is absent, another practitioner qualified to at least Level 3 must be present.

Ratios are maintained during staff absence by deploying other practitioners within the setting or using agency staff. During lunchtime, ratios must be maintained, with a Level 3-qualified practitioner and a First Aider present at all times to monitor children's safety while eating.

Reception: Each Reception class has a qualified teacher and a Learning Support Assistant. An additional Learning Support Assistant is assigned to support individual children across the three classes.

Safe sleep and rest

The school recognises the importance of rest and sleep in supporting children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, learning and development. We are committed to providing a safe, comfortable and appropriate environment in which children can rest or sleep when needed.

Children's sleep needs and routines vary according to their age, development and individual circumstances. We work in partnership with parents and carers to understand and support each child's needs.

Safe sleep and rest arrangements

- Children have access to a designated, quiet and comfortable area for rest and sleep.
- All sleep and rest equipment is age-appropriate, clean, well maintained and checked regularly for safety.
- Children sleep on suitable, stable and firm surfaces appropriate to their age and developmental needs.
- Children are encouraged to rest or sleep when they show signs of tiredness. They are never forced to sleep.
- Children who do not wish to sleep are offered quiet, restful alternatives.
- Children must not sleep on sofas, armchairs or other unsuitable furniture.
- Children must not be left sleeping in car seats, pushchairs or other sitting devices. If a child falls asleep in one of these, staff must move them to an appropriate sleep space as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Bedding, blankets and comforters must be appropriate for the child's age and used in a way that does not create a risk of overheating or suffocation.
- Children must be dressed comfortably and appropriately for the room temperature.

Supervision and monitoring

- Children must remain within the sight and hearing of a member of staff while sleeping.
- Staff must maintain appropriate supervision and carry out regular physical checks on sleeping children.
- Staff must remain alert to changes in a child's breathing, colour, temperature, position or general wellbeing.
- Any concerns must be acted upon immediately and reported to the Room Leader, Nursery Leader, EYFS Phase Leader and/or Deputy Headteacher.
- Staff must ensure that children are positioned safely and that their faces remain uncovered during sleep.
- Sleep checks must be recorded in the school's designated sleep monitoring record.

Sleep environment

- Sleep and rest areas must be clean, calm, well ventilated and free from hazards.
- Room temperatures must be monitored to help ensure that children remain comfortable and do not become too hot or cold.
- Sleep equipment must be positioned safely and away from potential hazards.
- Children must have sufficient space to rest comfortably without disturbing, or being disturbed by, others.
- Any bedding or comfort items brought from home must be checked for suitability and safety.
- Sleep areas must be kept free from unnecessary toys, loose items and equipment that could present a hazard.

Individual sleep routines and communication with parents

- Parents and carers will be consulted about their child's usual sleep routines, preferences and individual needs.
- Staff will work in partnership with families to provide consistency between home and school wherever possible.
- Relevant medical information or health conditions that may affect a child's sleep must be shared with the appropriate staff.
- An individual sleep plan will be developed where a child has additional medical, developmental or specific care needs.
- Medical advice relating to sleep positioning or specialist equipment will be followed in consultation with the child's healthcare professional.
- Parents and carers will be informed of any significant changes or concerns relating to their child's sleep during the school day.

Staff responsibilities

All staff working in the EYFS must:

- Understand and follow the school's safe sleep and rest procedures.
- Check sleep equipment and the sleep environment before use.

- Maintain appropriate supervision of sleeping children.
- Complete sleep monitoring records accurately.
- Ensure that sleep equipment and bedding are cleaned and maintained appropriately.
- Report concerns about a child's sleep, health or wellbeing to the Room Leader, Nursery Leader, EYFS Phase Leader and/or Deputy Headteacher.
- Respect children's individual sleep needs and provide opportunities for rest without placing pressure on children to sleep.

Recording and monitoring

A sleep record must be maintained for every child who sleeps during the school day. It must include:

- The time the child settled to sleep.
- The times and outcomes of regular physical checks.
- Any observations or concerns, including changes in breathing, colour, temperature or position.
- The time the child woke up.
- Any actions taken by staff.

Records will be shared with parents and carers as appropriate and stored in accordance with the school's data protection and confidentiality procedures.

Emergencies and safeguarding

If a member of staff has concerns about a sleeping child's breathing, responsiveness or general wellbeing, they must act immediately.

Staff must follow the school's emergency procedures, including administering paediatric first aid where appropriate, contacting the emergency services if required, and informing parents or carers and the relevant senior member of staff.

Any incident or concern must be recorded and managed in line with the school's safeguarding, health and safety, and accident-reporting procedures.

Food safety and food preparation

Shakespeare Primary School is committed to ensuring that all food and drink provided to children in the Early Years is safe, hygienically prepared and appropriate to their individual needs. Food and drink provided by the setting will be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible to children throughout the day.

This section applies to food prepared, handled, served or used in learning activities within the Early Years setting. It should be read alongside the Allergy and Medical Conditions policies and the arrangements agreed with the school catering provider.

Food hygiene and preparation

- All staff involved in preparing or handling food must receive appropriate food hygiene training and must understand and follow the school's food safety procedures.

- Food must be prepared, stored and served in clean, suitable areas using clean equipment and utensils. Food preparation surfaces, tables and equipment must be cleaned and disinfected as appropriate before and after use.
- Staff must wash their hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water before handling food, after using the toilet, after changing nappies or supporting toileting, after handling waste or animals, and whenever hands may have become contaminated.
- Staff must maintain high standards of personal hygiene. Cuts or wounds must be covered with a suitable waterproof dressing, and staff must not handle food if they are unwell with symptoms that could contaminate food.
- Raw and ready-to-eat foods must be kept separate to prevent cross-contamination. Food must be stored at safe temperatures, protected from contamination, checked for use-by dates and discarded if it is unsafe or unsuitable.
- Any food brought from home for packed lunches must be managed in accordance with the school's food safety and allergy procedures. Staff must check packaging and ingredient information where relevant.

Allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements

- The school is fully compliant with Benedict's Law. Please see the separate Allergy Policy for further information.
- Information on allergy provision during preparation of school lunches for Reception can be obtained from Catering Leeds.

Safe eating and choking prevention

- Children must be seated safely on an appropriately sized chair while eating and must not be allowed to walk, run or play with food in their mouths.
- Children must remain within the sight and hearing of a member of staff throughout snack and mealtimes. Staff must actively supervise, remain alert to choking and allergic reactions, and, where possible, sit facing the children.
- A member of staff with a valid full-course paediatric first aid certificate must be present in the room while children are eating.
- Food must be prepared in a way that reflects each child's developmental needs and reduces choking risks. Staff must remove stones, pips and bones; cut small round foods such as grapes and cherry tomatoes lengthways and into quarters; and cut hard fruit and vegetables into suitable slices or prepare them in a safer softened form.
- Whole nuts and whole seeds must not be given to children under five. Popcorn, hard sweets, raw jelly cubes and marshmallows must not be offered because they present choking risks. Staff must follow current Department for Education and NHS guidance when selecting and preparing food.
- Children must be discouraged from sharing food, and staff must ensure that food is not used in play in a way that creates a choking, allergy or hygiene risk.
- Any choking incident requiring staff intervention must be recorded, reported to parents or carers and reviewed so that any patterns or changes to practice can be identified.

Food preparation activities with children

- Food preparation and tasting activities may be used to support learning, independence and the development of healthy eating habits. These activities must be risk assessed and appropriately supervised.
- Staff must check children's dietary information and allergies before an activity and ensure that all ingredients and equipment are suitable.
- Children must wash their hands before handling food. Staff must supervise the use of age-appropriate utensils and keep hot surfaces, sharp tools, electrical equipment and other hazards inaccessible to children.
- Food used for activities must be stored, prepared and served hygienically. Raw ingredients must not be tasted, and children must not eat uncooked mixtures containing raw or partially cooked egg unless the eggs meet the relevant British Lion quality standard.
- Where food is used for sensory or messy play, staff must consider choking risks, allergies, contamination and the possibility that children may put materials in their mouths. Unsafe foods, including raw jelly cubes and marshmallows, must not be used.

Food incidents and reporting

Any suspected food-related illness, contamination, allergic reaction or choking incident must be reported immediately to the Room Leader, Nursery Leader, EYFS Phase Leader and Deputy Headteacher. Staff must follow the school's emergency, first aid, accident and safeguarding procedures, inform parents or carers as appropriate, and complete the required records.

Where the statutory notification requirement applies to the registered provider, food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises must be notified to Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable and within 14 days.

Relevant guidance

This section is informed by the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (effective 1 September 2026), the Department for Education's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance, the Department for Education's food safety guidance for early years providers, the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs, and applicable food allergen information requirements.

3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn

Areas of learning

The educational programme is delivered through learning experiences focused on the seven areas of learning and development:

- Prime area: Communication and Language
- Prime area: Physical Development
- Prime area: Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Specific area: Literacy

- Specific area: Mathematics
- Specific area: Understanding the World
- Specific area: Expressive Arts and Design

The three prime areas ignite children's passion for learning. The skills and knowledge developed through these areas are then applied across the specific areas.

The 'Curriculum of Excellence from the Heart of Leeds' is delivered in Nursery and Reception through the Shakespeare EYFS Progression Models. These models have been developed by the school's Early Years staff in response to Development Matters (2020). They guide the focus of learning and development across the seven areas and are designed to support the children who attend Shakespeare Primary School and Nursery.

The progression models reflect the families and local community and are responsive to children's needs and experiences. They support children to embed skills and knowledge in depth.

Long-term phonics plans begin with Phase 1 in Nursery and progress to the Little Wandle programme in Reception. Planning and provision support the gradual development of phonological awareness throughout the Early Years, helping children to become early readers who can decode with increasing fluency by the end of Reception.

Vocabulary development is a key driver of learning across the Early Years. Vocabulary is taught explicitly and discreetly through play, adult-led teaching and a range of effective strategies. The Word Aware approach is used across the setting, alongside the Blank Language Scheme to develop children's language for thinking.

4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn

Indoor learning environment

The indoor learning environment is enriched with opportunities for children to explore objects, feelings and experiences and to apply the knowledge shared by skilled practitioners.

Planning for continuous provision within the Areas of Provision considers curriculum intent, implementation and impact. This provides a clear process for selecting, developing, challenging and evaluating learning opportunities.

Continuous provision is reviewed and developed each half-term to meet children's changing needs. It is also enhanced and adapted weekly in response to children's current interests and needs. Practitioners use thoughtful, skilful interactions to support learning, extend thinking and develop vocabulary.

Outdoor learning environment

We recognise the importance of outdoor learning, particularly for families who have limited or no access to outdoor space at home. The outdoor environment offers experiences that complement and extend indoor learning, and its use is planned carefully.

Children are encouraged to explore nature and the elements. Open-ended resources and equipment support imaginative play, language development and exploration. The outdoor area also provides opportunities for physical development through the climbing frame, bikes and other equipment.

Once a session has started and free-flow learning is underway, the outdoor area should remain open until the end of the session. This applies to both Nursery and Reception.

Planning for learning

The daily timetable provides purposeful play and a balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences. This balance varies according to each child's needs and stage of development.

The amount of adult-led activity offered to each child will differ in response to their age and individual needs, as identified through ongoing informal assessment. Skilled adult interactions are central to supporting children's learning. Where a child is falling behind, timely intervention will be provided to help them keep up.

The three Characteristics of Effective Learning are considered during planning, assessment and evaluation:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

Children have daily opportunities to develop these characteristics, supporting independence and positive attitudes to learning.

Inclusion and intervention

We aim to ensure that every child reaches their individual potential during their time with us. Intervention is planned and evaluated weekly and is responsive to each child's needs.

Intervention may target individuals or groups, including children who need further challenge to exceed age-related expectations, children for whom we need to diminish the difference, and children who could reach age-related expectations with additional support. Where children have similar needs, intervention may be delivered in a small group, for example, for pupils eligible for Pupil Premium.

Phonics intervention is tailored to each child (see the Phonics Policy and Practice). In Reception and Pre-School, children are assessed against the Talk Boost early talk specification, and appropriate interventions are planned. In Reception, children are screened for the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI), with a group identified for targeted support.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are supported through the Graduated Approach. Children with significant delays who are on the SEND Register have their progress monitored using Connecting Steps.

At the start of Nursery and Reception, and again each term, children who are finding it difficult to settle are considered using Ferre Laevers' Well-being and Involvement Scales. Children who continue to be assessed as low in both areas will have Personal Interest Plans. Practitioners will work closely with parents and carers to support improvements in wellbeing and involvement.

5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt

Formative assessment

Formative assessment takes place continuously in Nursery and Reception. Practitioners observe children's interests, abilities and needs during independent play and interactions with peers and adults.

There is a strong emphasis on teaching through sustained shared thinking and sensitive interactions between adults and children, rather than recording every learning experience as a written observation. Practitioners' knowledge of children, developed through direct support for learning, informs formative assessment and next steps.

Weekly 'wow' moments are shared with parents and families through Tapestry.

Summative assessment

In Nursery and Reception, baseline assessments take place within the first six weeks after a child joins the setting. These provide a starting point from which progress can be measured. Reception children also complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

After the baseline assessment, summative assessments take place at the end of each term. Practitioners assess children across the seven areas of learning and record whether they are 'on track' or 'not on track' for their age and stage.

Moderation takes place regularly within school and in collaboration with other schools across the cluster.

The progress check at age two

Children who join our Nursery at age two will receive a progress check to review their development in relation to age-related milestones. The Key Person will complete the progress check in partnership with the child's parent or carer.

The EYFS Profile

At the end of the Summer Term in Reception, and no later than 30 June, an EYFS Profile will be completed for every child. Each child's development will be assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals. Practitioners will indicate whether each goal is 'emerging' or 'expected'.

Information will be gathered from the Class Teacher, Key Person, parent or carer, and any other professional working with the child. The outcomes of the EYFS Profile will be shared with parents and carers and with the child's Year 1 teacher.

Reception Class Teachers will meet with Year 1 teachers during the Summer Term to support transition planning for the following September. The EYFS Profile will also be submitted to the Local Authority for each child.

6. Self-regulation and executive function

We aim to strengthen children's self-control and reduce impulsivity, supporting the development of self-regulation and executive function. As children move through the Early Years, they are supported to take increasing control of their behaviour and learning.

Regular collaboration with peers gives children opportunities to practise self-regulation and begin to adapt their responses. Through sustained shared thinking, children are encouraged to talk about the strategies they will use in their learning and to explain their plans to an adult or peer.

Reflecting on situations and experiences helps children to become more thoughtful and increases the likelihood that they will adapt their behaviour in the future.

This work begins in the Nursery Den and Hive, where practitioners use careful, positive interactions to help children develop increasing control over their emotions. This approach is particularly important for children who may enter Nursery with less-developed self-regulation skills.

7. Partnership with parents

Our aim is to build positive, lasting relationships between staff, parents and children, creating a strong partnership that continues as children move through school.

Every child in Nursery and Reception has a Key Person: a designated practitioner who spends additional time with the child to build a secure, two-way relationship. Each classroom has a Key Person display board to help parents and carers identify their child's Key Person.

In the Nursery Den, children are supported to choose their own Key Person. This is reviewed in light of the relationships they develop, with particular consideration given to the practitioner with whom the child has formed the strongest bond. Tapestry supports ongoing two-way communication between home and school.

The first contact between school and home is an important step in working together to secure the best outcomes for children. Parents and carers are actively involved in planning for children's learning through shared assessment of current development and personalised approaches to future experiences. Where a child is not on track, school and home work together to agree strategies that will support progress.

To strengthen communication and the sharing of information throughout the Early Years, parents and carers are regularly invited to attend Open Mornings, Key Person Mornings and workshops. These sessions help parents develop their understanding of how to support learning and development at home and provide practical strategies across the curriculum.