

Intent

Our aim is to ensure our children grow in self-belief and confidence enabling them to succeed as learners and in life. Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a strong focus on PSED and an ethos of respect, kindness and friendship is woven into daily life.

There is a real emphasis placed on safeguarding all children and we acknowledge that children identified as vulnerable or at risk of delay will require additional intervention and support from the onset. We value the backgrounds and cultures of our children and respect the important role played by parents/carers in their child's learning, progress and development. The philosophy of collaborating with parents/carers as the child's first educator remains at the heart of the Early Years at Emmaus.

Early Years provision is intrinsically linked to our whole school curriculum drivers:

- **Gospel Values**
- **Cultural Capital**
- **Diversity**
- **Independence**
- **High expectations**

We build **cultural capital** through the experiences we offer to the children. We value and celebrate children's cultures, languages and traditions and offer a curriculum rich in wonder, awe and memorable experiences. We work hard to provide a stimulating environment that provides exciting opportunities, promotes challenge, exploration, adventure and a real love of learning. We celebrate the **diverse nature of our world** and challenge stereotypes wherever possible through the books we share, the visitors we welcome, the celebrations we experience. We aim to embed the agreed **Gospel values and ethos of our school: Hope; Love; Friendship and Trust.**

It is our intent that all children develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally in an environment which values all cultures, communities and people. We aim for our children to be confident and **independent**, to believe in themselves and interact positively with others. We understand that play is an integral part of learning and this is at the heart of our EYFS curriculum. We believe that the correct mix of adult directed and uninterrupted child-initiated play ensures the best outcomes for pupils. Warm and positive relationships between staff and children, consistent routines and strong relationships with parents are key. We recognise the crucial role that Early Years education has to play in providing firm foundations upon which the rest of a child's education is successfully based.

We pride ourselves in providing our children with inspirational learning environments and especially value the importance of exciting outdoor learning experiences, freely available every day. We incorporate Forest School initiatives into our outdoor provision to develop appreciation for God's Creation, connection with nature, mindfulness, physical skills and emotional well-being.

Our ambition is to nurture 'every child a reader at Emmaus' - we want all children in EYFS to become a fluent reader who loves literature and reads for pleasure. We believe that all children have the right to be immersed in language-rich texts during their time in the EYS and there is a sharp focus on ensuring that children acquire a wide vocabulary, communicate effectively and, in Reception, secure a knowledge of phonics, which gives them the foundations for future learning, especially in preparation for them to become confident and fluent readers.

As a well-established EYFS team, we observe, prioritise and identify trends and patterns in learning, development and attainment over time. We strive to maintain high standards and design the curriculum to be ambitious, with all staff sharing the same commitment to **high expectations** within the setting. We aim to foster excellent attitudes to learning by providing effective and timely adult interactions to ensure that learning is instantly captured and enhanced.

Our bespoke EYFS curriculum is planned and designed to provide all children with the opportunities and experiences that they need in order to develop positive dispositions and attitudes. Children's interests and opinions are sought and lines of development are explored to ensure that children are motivated to learn and the best possible, ambitious learning outcomes are achieved.

Our curriculum is ambitious and designed to give children, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. A coherently planned and sequenced curriculum ensures we are able to build on what children know and can do in order to gain sufficient knowledge and skills for their future learning.

The Early Years staff are committed to ensuring the best provision, resources and learning opportunities are available to the children in their care. They are resolute in staying up to date with local, national and international initiatives pertaining to outstanding Early Years education.

The EYs team is ambitious for all children to achieve their expected outcomes. Children are encouraged to take an active part in their learning journey and become happy, healthy and independent learners. We want our children to be continually inspired to be independent, aspirational and always “reach for the stars”.

Academic and social ambitions are held by **all** staff for **all** children. SEND and vulnerable pupils are supported by all adults in accessing a curriculum designed to be ambitious and adapted to meet their needs.

Implementation

Emmas EYFS meets the welfare requirements laid down in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025) and actively safeguard and promote the welfare of all of our children.

The core values of the school and the diverse nature of the world in which children live are explicitly taught through daily acts of Collective Worship, PSED and RE experiences and are also interwoven in the relationships, routines and experiences we provide for our children.

The EYFS curriculum is taught through topics, which are enriched with classroom enhancements, trips and visitors and supported by quality key texts. These are chosen carefully to encourage children's speech, language and communication development and children have meaningful learning across the intended curriculum. All planning, however, is flexible and responsive to children's needs so plans can be changed and adapted dependent on children's interests.

Children are supported to become early readers through enjoyment of books and the systematic teaching of phonics. Children develop their mathematical thinking through direct teaching and exploration. We want our children to become confident mathematicians who can apply what they have learnt to real life experiences.

Staff show expertise in teaching systematic, synthetic phonics through regular training, coaching and monitoring of RWI. All children practise their reading from books that match their phonic knowledge and these are used consistently at home and in school. Right from the beginning, phonics is taught daily in Nursery and Reception. Phonic skills are modelled and reinforced through all areas of the curriculum by each member of our team. We place a strong emphasis on multi-sensory, active, talk-rich experiences, planned according to children's communication needs.

Staff are directed to read to children throughout the day and are encouraged to read and story-tell in a way that excites and engages them, introducing new ideas, concepts and vocabulary through fiction and non-fiction books.

The teaching of mathematics allows all children to experience sufficient practice to gain fluency in using and understanding numbers. Staff are knowledgeable in teaching core mathematical concepts and ensure that practical experiences in all areas of provision support mathematical development provide a strong basis for more complex learning later on.

We create 'language rich' environments through the use of songs, nursery rhymes, stories and providing time for quality interactions between adults and between peers. Trained staff ensure that interactions are positive and progressive, allowing children to flourish and gather words at pace in order to become confident communicators.

Our learning environments and all our interactions and routines are intentional, and we are proud of all our children achieve. Learning experiences are adapted in order to reflect children's interests and progression. Children are supported to learn to work together, manage their feelings, be curious and ask questions through skilled adult facilitated play.

Children have access to well-resourced, high quality learning environments, indoors and outdoors, including Forest School. These are organised to allow children to develop new skills, build confidence, access materials and resources independently and make their own choices to move their learning forward. Staff are skilled at asking questions that encourage children to think more deeply about their learning, to extend their use of language across the curriculum and to make connections in order to embed new learning. We use outdoor provision to enable our children to strengthen their core muscles through physical play; children spend time outdoors in their natural environment in all weathers. They develop through wonderful, exploratory, sensory experiences in our texture kitchen, giant sandpit, balance bike track, climbing tree and Forest School.

As part of the learning and teaching process, children are assessed in relation to their progress towards Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals. These judgements are made on the basis of accumulative observations and in-depth knowledge of the children acquired through ongoing assessment. These ongoing assessments are used to inform planning and next steps in teaching and learning for all children throughout the year.

EYFS staff are knowledgeable about the areas of learning they teach and are directed towards the EYFS curriculum, outcomes and pedagogy in order to support the learning needs of the children. Opportunities for training involve all staff in order to provide high quality learning experiences for all children.

Quality-first teaching is based on a team planning approach, centred around children's individual needs and interests. Staff are skilled in the teaching of phonics and reading and generate an enthusiasm for reading and a love of literature whilst effectively teaching new ideas, concepts and vocabulary through daily story sessions and circle time activities. Teaching within the EY is designed to help children remember long term what they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts. Assessments are always relevant and do not place unnecessary burdens on staff or children.

The EY team are devoted to creating an environment that supports an ambitious, coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for future learning. Resources are easily accessible, meet the children's learning needs, promote focus and engagement and develop opportunities to gain experience.

We value and celebrate each child's own knowledge and experiences that link to their culture and wider family. We build on their individual interests and acknowledge our families as the first and most important educators of their child.

We understand the importance of parental engagement and believe that our parents have a crucial role to play in their children's education. We create strong partnerships between home and school.

Parents/carers are continually involved in their child's learning, progress and development. They are engaged in supporting their child to learn to read, through parent workshops, information leaflets and sessions where parents are invited to come in and read with their child. Learning logs are carefully tailored to ensure that parents/carers are involved and informed of key learning each week. They are invited to work with their child to reinforce and consolidate at home. Families frequently email to share their child's experiences and to evidence their participation in home learning challenges each half-term.

Information, guidance and training is provided to parents and carers about their child's progress and how to support their child with reading. Technology is used positively to support parents/carers with supporting their child's progress. Workshops and drop-ins are organised to support parents/carers in building their skills in this area in order to further improve outcomes for their children.

Observational assessments are ongoing, relevant and purposeful, referenced to the Early Years outcomes and leading to improved outcomes for children. All staff take responsibility for making informed judgements about children's development, celebrating achievements and planning next steps for learning.

Children's social, emotional and mental health is nurtured and self-care is encouraged through daily mindfulness, meditation exercises and yoga. Sensory needs are catered for using specialist resources to allow children to self-regulate. Healthy choices are encouraged and embedded in our daily routines: snack, physical activities, PE, outdoor activities.

Emotional well-being and security are at the heart of our curriculum and care practices. In provision, staff continually promote the development of children's character and highlight clear messages in relation to why it is important to eat, drink, rest, exercise and be kind to each other. Mindfulness, yoga, meditation, massage and ROAR are used daily to promote positive mental health and develop young children's awareness of their own emotional responses and the need to manage these effectively with the support of the sensitive adults around them.

Transition to Nursery and then Reception is carefully planned. Families receive comprehensive information booklets, welcome meetings, 1:1 meetings with the staff and transition leaflets prior to starting school. Robust entry assessment take place within the first few weeks of entry to Nursery and Baseline Assessment is carried out within the first four weeks of starting in Reception. These assessments alongside observations and parent/carer reflections are quickly reviewed before the end of the first half-term. Pupil progress meetings take place at key points during the year. Staff arrange intervention programmes, which include small group and individual support to address the current needs of each cohort and bridge the gaps in learning and development.

The Reception team work closely with Year 1 staff to ensure a smooth transition and enable them to plan appropriate teaching, learning and progression at the very beginning of Key Stage 1. EYFSP data, SEND pupil profiles and extensive information regarding the children, their achievements, needs and welfare are discussed with Year 1 staff during our transition meetings. Transition booklets are sent home for parents/carers to share with their children over the summer. Reception classes are evaluated and re-organised ready for Year 1; this provides a clear balance of ability, denomination and emotional/social well-being.

Emmaus EYFS have our own email and social media channels, distinct to the rest of the school and there are very comprehensive class pages for Nursery/Reception on the school website. Technology is used daily to keep parents constantly updated, providing them with immediate insight into their child's learning, development and achievements.

The Early Years team are well established and have a vast knowledge of the majority of families at the school. This enables them to identify and close gaps in learning to support children in making rapid progress. The team seek out CPD opportunities and have established firm links with other outstanding Early Years settings, teaching schools, and independent advisors.

SLT conduct termly observations and learning walks. This monitoring ensures that teaching is always good and frequently outstanding. Pupil progress meetings and SEND reviews provide opportunities for the Early Years lead to discuss individuals and groups of children and ensure rigorous assessment has taken place.

Impact

In Emmaus EYFS, we have the unique privilege of supporting children to begin their own journey of faith, developing the values of hope, love, friendship and trust in their lives. We take pride in nurturing children to develop their own sense of themselves. They leave the EYFS feeling confident, capable, curious about the world around them, and eager to discover more. We feel confident that our children are tolerant of difference and celebrate the uniqueness of others.

Data shows that children in Early Years at Emmaus make outstanding progress from their starting points. Children, on average, arrive in Nursery at much lower starting points than pre-pandemic. During their time with us, children make rapid progress towards the national expectation for a good level of development at the end of Reception. Attainment at the end of EYFS is consistently above both local and national. Most children achieve the early learning goals and all make good progress from their starting points, including SEND and vulnerable pupils. Children with lower starting points achieve well due to high quality language development and play. Pupils also make good progress toward their age-related expectations both academically and socially, developing a sense of themselves before transitioning into Year One. We believe that these high standards are achieved due to our carefully planned environment, enriched play-based curriculum, quality first teaching and the rigour of our assessment.

Children leave the EYFS with a "living library" in their minds and the beginning of a lifelong love of literature, language and learning. They develop detailed knowledge and skills across the seven areas of learning in an age-appropriate way and this is evidenced in our end of year data and observations across the year. A systemic and effective approach to teaching early reading and phonics and the development of Read Write Inc ensures that all children learn to read words and sentences accurately by the end of Reception. Children use their knowledge of phonics to read with increasing accuracy, speed and fluency. It is evident that children have been exposed to and enjoyed a wide variety familiar stories, rhymes and songs. They listen attentively and respond with comprehension and a developing vocabulary which they apply in different contexts.

By the end of the EYFS phase, most children have begun to develop lifelong learning skills and are capable of managing their own feelings and behaviour and understand how these have an impact on others. As a result of the creative, stimulating environment we provide, children flourish and develop into confident, motivated and independent learners ready for the next stage of their education. They are able to apply their knowledge to a range of situations making links, explaining their ideas, and understanding. Children are confident to take risks, display curiosity and discuss their successes and failures with peers and adults drawing on their experiences to improve or adjust what they are doing. They enter Key Stage 1, ready to access the curriculum, confident to express their feelings and continue their learning journey happily at Emmaus.

Pupil voice surveys and parental feedback always demonstrate that parents/carers are confident that their children are nurtured in a safe, caring and engaging environment every day. There is a huge appreciation for the rich experiences and outstanding progress made during their time in Early Years.

Our curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure relevance and to ensure the voices of our pupils, parents, staff and governors are heard.

In 2022, we were again awarded the **Early Years Quality Mark**.

In 2023, Emmaus Early years provision was graded **Outstanding** by OFSTED

Where is the evidence?

- Pupil Progress tracking data
- OFSTED report 2023
- EYQM report 2022
- Monitoring feedback
- Early Years Policies
- Baseline Assessment
- Intervention data
- EYFSP analysis and data
- Year 1 transition documents
- Nursery/Reception transition documents
- Observational assessments
- Early Years Action Plan
- Special Books
- Learning Logs
- Social Media channels/website
- Parents Carer/pupil questionnaires
- Half-termly RWI data and analysis.
- Emmaus EYFS social media and Class Pages on school website

Reviewed: September 2025