



*Travelling together with Jesus*

Rationale

Teaching and learning in Emmaus EYFS is rich in wonder, awe, curiosity and discovery. The EYFS team are committed to providing outstanding early years education which gives children a secure foundation for future learning. High-quality play-based provision is placed at the heart of the teaching and learning process. Our curriculum meets the standards set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025), across the seven areas of learning. We value the role of adults in the EYFS as co-learners, guides, and advocates for every child's potential—supporting them to become enthusiastic, resilient, and lifelong learners. We believe that a balance of adult-supported and uninterrupted child-initiated play experiences, together with strong partnerships with parents will ensure the very best outcomes for all our pupils in Nursery and Reception.

EYFS Curriculum

At Emmaus, our bespoke EYFS curriculum is intrinsically linked to our whole school curriculum drivers: **Gospel Values; Cultural Capital; Diversity; Independence; High Expectations.**

Our coherently planned and sequenced curriculum is flexible enough to include children's interests, developmental stages, and individual needs, ensuring all children develop physically, linguistically, intellectually, socially and emotionally. It builds on what children already know and can do and inspires a confident disposition to learning through relevant, meaningful, imaginative, challenging and enjoyable experiences. In planning and guiding provision for our children in Nursery and Reception, EYFS practitioners use the principles set out in the Statutory Framework for EYFS (2025) to support practice:

**Unique Child** – recognising that all children develop differently, at varying rates.

**Positive Relationships** – ensuring children feel safe, valued, and supported.

**Enabling Environments** – providing stimulating, language-rich, and purposeful environments indoors and outdoors.

**Learning & Development** – planning a curriculum that builds progressively on children's knowledge and skills.

The EYFS curriculum is taught through seasonal topics, which are enriched with classroom enhancements, trips and visitors. Quality key texts are at the heart of all planned learning experiences. These are chosen carefully to encourage children's vocabulary acquisition and communication development. All planning, however, is flexible and responsive to children's needs so experiences can be changed and adapted dependent on children's intrinsic motivations.

Planning and provision is informed by the best available evidence on how children learn and reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge and attitudes children need as foundations for good future progress.

Planning takes the form of:

Long-term: curriculum overview across the year.

Medium-term: half-termly themes and experiences.

Short-term: weekly/daily plans responsive to ongoing assessment.

There are seven areas of learning and development within the EYFS. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child initiated activity.

These three areas are known as the **prime areas**:

**Communication and Language** (Listening, Attention and Understanding; Speaking)

**Physical Development** (Gross Motor Skills; Fine Motor Skills)

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development** (Self-Regulation; Managing Self; Building Relationships)

These areas are a focus in both Nursery and Reception but have a particular emphasis for the youngest children as they

form the basis for successful learning in the specific areas. The balance shifts towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the prime areas.

The four **specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied, are:

**Literacy** (Comprehension; Word Reading; Writing)

**Mathematics** (Number; Numerical Patterns)

**Understanding the World** (Past and Present; People, Culture and Communities; The Natural World)

**Expressive Arts and Design** (Being Imaginative and Expressive; Creating with Materials).

### Play

Play is essential for children's development. We recognise that effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and may follow children's interests. Play-based learning is paramount and children are encouraged and empowered to direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Through play, in a secure environment with effective adult support, children in Emmaus EYFS can:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- Enjoy learning
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- Be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings
- Take risks and make mistakes
- Think creatively and imaginatively
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problem
- Express fears or relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

### Environment & Resources

Attractive and stimulating learning environments enable children to feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have continuous access to well-resourced, organised and engaging indoor and outdoor environments, set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. These provide exciting teaching and learning opportunities, promote challenge, exploration, adventure and a real love of learning.

The outdoor environment in both Nursery and Reception has been designed to enhance teaching opportunities and is an inspiring space to learn. Outdoor provision is crucial in developing key characteristics of learning and promoting well-being. Nursery and Reception classes both have accessible outdoor learning environments and their own Forest School Area. Children have the freedom to spend time outdoors in their natural environment in all weathers. The free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities, space and freedom for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can be more connected with the natural world, allowing them to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

Organisation allows 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.

Children learn in a 'language rich' environment ; they are immersed in stories, rhymes, songs several times per day; there is always time for quality interactions between adults and between peers, allowing children to flourish and gather words at pace in order to become confident communicators.

Children are encouraged to become early readers through enjoyment of books and the systematic teaching of phonics. Staff show expertise in teaching systematic, synthetic phonics. All children practise their reading from books that match their phonic knowledge and these are used consistently at home and in school. Staff routinely 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.

In Nursery and Reception, children develop their mathematical thinking through direct teaching and first-hand, practical exploration. The teaching of mathematics allows all children sufficient practice to gain fluency in using and understanding of numbers and numerical patterns. Staff are knowledgeable in teaching core mathematical concepts and ensure that practical invitations to apply mathematical learning and extend mathematical vocabulary are available in all areas of provision.

Practitioners consider the development of children's capabilities with a view to ensuring that they complete the EYFS, ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply as preparation for the next stage in education.

#### Role of the Adult

At Emmaus, we believe that a skilled, caring, attentive adult is central to promoting high-quality learning and development. Our EYFS team create the conditions in which our children can thrive, explore, and make sense of the world around them. Staff are deployed effectively to maximise interactions and learning opportunities. Through sensitive interactions, thoughtful planning, and skilled observation, our EYFS practitioners nurture each child's curiosity, independence, and confidence as a learner.

To maintain high standards of teaching and learning at Emmaus, we recognise that it is essential to invest in staff through ongoing professional development (CPD), reflective practice, and collaboration. By continually developing their knowledge, skills, and understanding of early years pedagogy, our EYFS practitioners are empowered to provide the best possible learning experiences and outcomes for every child. Our EYFS team are a talented, supportive, warm group of individuals who are highly-skilled in:

- Supporting children's learning through planned play activity
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Developing children's language and communication in their play.
- Observing children and adapting provision
- Providing warm, positive interaction.

Our EYFS team observe and respond to children's interests, extending their thinking through open-ended questions, modelling language, and introducing new concepts at the right moment. Positive relationships form the foundation for effective learning, allowing children to take risks, persevere, and develop a sense of belonging.

#### Assessment

The assessment and observation of our youngest children is an essential part of supporting them to make appropriate progress. Our assessment system is the cornerstone for ensuring the provision in the EYFS is of high quality and appropriate for all children.

Robust assessment enables EYFS staff to plan provision and develop next steps in learning for all pupils. Practitioners observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles and then shape learning experiences in light of the observations.

To ensure that we have evidence of a child's progress and can effectively plan next steps, Emmaus staff use a range of strategies and tools including anecdotal notes, photographs and observations to build a complete picture of achievement.

Entry assessments for the prime areas of learning (PSED, Communication & Language and Physical Development) are undertaken when children enter the Nursery. Baseline assessment (RBA) is carried out in Reception to determine each child's developmental starting point in Literacy, Communication and Language and Mathematics.

Attainment and progress is measured against the criteria in *Development Matters, the non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS (2023)*. We acknowledge the following key characteristics of effective assessment, as outlined in *Development Matters*:

- Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence.
- Effective assessment requires practitioners to understand child development. Practitioners also need to be clear about what they want children to know and be able to do
- Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help.

- Assessment should not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time.

EYFS expected standards are set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, covering children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At Emmaus, we assess children and judge whether they are working at the expected standard when they demonstrate consistent progress towards the Early Learning Goals appropriate for their age and stage of development:

**Nursery**

Working at **expected standard for 3 to 4 year olds**

**Reception**

Working at **expected standard for 4 to 5 year olds**

At the end of Reception, children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals:

**Emerging** (not yet reaching the expected standard/ELG)

**Expected** (meeting the standard/ELG)

Attainment and progress judgements are made against the criteria in *Development Matters* are shared with parents/carers at least termly.

**Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)**

Within the first six weeks of children starting school, Reception staff will conduct the RBA. The RBA:

- Is an activity-based, age-appropriate assessment of children's ability in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language.
- Is expected to take approximately 20 minutes per child.
- Can be paused and completed in more than one sitting.
- Will be administered by a Reception teacher or suitably qualified practitioner, e.g. the SENCO.
- Will be used to create a baseline for school-level progress measures and will measure the progress children make from Reception until the end of Year 6.

After completion of the RBA, Reception staff will receive a series of short, narrative statements that tell them how pupils performed in the assessment and use these to inform their teaching approaches.

**Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)**

To summarise and describe children's learning and development at the end of the EYFS, Reception staff complete an EYFSP for each child, including those with SEND, in compliance with the provisions outlined within the *EYFS assessment and reporting arrangements (ARA), 2025* document, and the *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025)*.

Reception staff assess each child against the Early Learning Goals. EYFSP judgements will be made based on the cumulative evidence recorded over the course of the year.

Evidence will include:

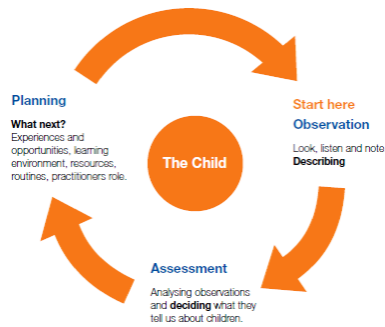
- Knowledge of the child.
- Photographs.
- Written and/or drawn evidence.
- Planned and un-planned observations of day-to-day interactions. Video, tape, audio or electronic recordings
- The child's view of his or her own learning.
- Information from parents/carers

EYFSP results are shared with parents/carers who are provided with an opportunity to discuss the outcomes.

**Formative Assessment**

As the year progresses children are monitored on their development and progress in all areas of learning. Formal assessments such as Read Write Inc, Whiterose Maths and Welcomm provide information for planning and intervention.

## Assessment Cycle



*Observation, Assessment, and Planning (OAP) cycle*

**Observation** – watching, listening, and noting what the child does.

**Assessment** – analysing those observations and deciding what they tell us about the child’s development.

**Planning** – deciding what experiences, opportunities, and support to provide next, then the cycle repeats.

Pupil Progress meetings take place three times per year. These ensure that staff have the opportunity to analyse their classes and devise interventions to support children in making next steps progress. This system is managed robustly to ensure that all children make progress from their starting points. Interventions are robustly monitored, evaluated and tracked by **all** staff to ensure their efficacy.

### **Assessment at the end of EYFS**

In addition to the EYFSP in Reception, annual reports chart children’s progress in Nursery and Reception and comment on their preferred learning styles, characteristics of learning and achievements. Assessment information is shared with Year 1 staff to inform their future planning and support them in making preparations for entry to KS1.

### **Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers are included in their child’s learning journey via learning log homework, EYS curriculum maps, social media, online communication, parent app, special books, wonder walls and challenge activities and tasks.

Parents Evenings take place in the autumn and spring term and annual reports are sent out at the end of the year and parents/carers given the opportunity to discuss them with teachers during an open evening in July.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of all EYFS staff to follow this policy.

The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring in the Early Years as part of the whole school monitoring system.

This policy will be reviewed before the start of each academic year and will evolve to incorporate the views of all staff concerned.

Parents/carers are invited to share and contribute to special books, learning journeys and learning logs on a regular basis. Attainment and progress against the criteria in Development Matters is shared with parents/carers at least termly.

### Formative Assessment

As the year progresses children are monitored on their development and progress in all areas of learning through formal assessments such as RWI, White Rose Maths, Chatterbugs and Welcomm.

Planning and provision is continually enhanced to ensure children’s interests are reflected and therefore successes and achievements captured through observations and photographs in their learning journey.

### Assessment Cycle In EYFS

1. Entry assessments take place in nursery through home visits and observations of children as they enter the nursery setting.

2. Baseline assessment takes place on entry to reception within the first 6 weeks of children's start date.
3. Ongoing observational assessments continue throughout the year and are recorded on iPads, charting everyday successes and achievements. These may then be accessed by parents/carers in the form of a 'Learning Journey'.
4. Pupil Progress meetings take place three times per year. These ensure that staff have the opportunity to analyse their classes and devise interventions to support children in making next steps progress. This system is managed robustly to ensure that all children make progress from their starting points.
5. Interventions are robustly monitored, evaluated and tracked by **all** staff to ensure their efficacy.

#### Assessment at the end of EYFS

Currently, the Early Years profile is completed for each child by the end of June in the Reception year. The profile provides information about each child's knowledge, understanding, abilities against expected standard and provides evidence to support Y1 planning and provision.

Development Matters form the basis of assessment in the Early Years.

At the end of the reception year, practitioners assess whether a child has: reached the expected standard (Expected); is working towards the expected standard (Emerging) or is achieving above the expected standard (Exceeding).

Early Years Profiles are completed for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities with reasonable adjustments made as necessary.

Results from the profile are shared with parents/carers who are provided with an opportunity to discuss the outcomes.

Annual reports chart children's progress and comment on their preferred learning styles, characteristics of learning and achievements with next steps identified.

Assessment information is shared with Year 1 staff to inform their future planning and support them in making preparations for entry to KS1.

Outcomes from the Early Years profile are currently collated and reported to the local authority.

#### Monitoring and Evaluating Teaching and Learning

Through a culture of continuous improvement and accountability at Emmaus, we ensure that all children benefit from high-quality teaching and learning that promotes curiosity, independence, and a lifelong love of learning. Monitoring and evaluating is essential for ensuring that every child makes strong progress across all areas of development. A robust cycle of reflection, assessment, and improvement underpins our early years practice and helps maintain our consistently high standards at Emmaus.

Leaders and EYFS practitioners work collaboratively to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through regular observations, learning walks, planning scrutiny, and analysis of assessment data. These processes provide insight into the effectiveness of provision, the impact of adult interactions, and the progress of individual and groups of children. Evidence gathered informs targeted support, professional discussions, and the sharing of best practice across the team.

Evaluation is continuous and reflective, focusing on what works well and identifying areas for development. Practitioners engage in professional dialogue, personal research and CPD to refine their practice and ensure it aligns with the principles of the EYFS and the unique needs of their children. Feedback and outcomes from monitoring are used to adapt the environment, improve planning, and strengthen adult-child interactions.

Monitoring in EYFS may draw on a wide range of evidence and approaches. Specifically, it may draw on:

- **Observations of children's play and interactions** – both spontaneous and planned, to see how children apply skills and knowledge in different contexts.
- **Assessments of learning and development** – including formative assessments (ongoing observations and notes) and summative assessments (e.g. the EYFS Profile at the end of Reception).
- **Children's work and creations** – drawings, models, mark-making, writing, displays and photos of activities that show progress over time.
- **Conversations with children** – listening to their ideas, explanations, and reflections on their learning.
- **Parental input and feedback** – parents' insights about children's interests, learning, and behaviour at home.
- **Information from other professionals** – such as speech and language therapists
- **Planning and provision records** – to evaluate how effectively the environment and teaching support learning across the EYFS areas.

- **Tracking and data systems** – used to identify patterns, monitor progress, and highlight any areas where children may need extra support.
- **Reflective practice** – EYFS practitioners are actively encouraged to review their own teaching, interactions and responses to ensure continuous improvement.

Evidence from monitoring feeds into:

- school self-evaluation
- EYFS action plans
- staff development planning
- appraisal/performance management
- reports to the Governing Body.

#### Parents/Carers

At Emmaus, we believe that parents/carers are the child's first educators. Our families are included and encouraged to participate in children's learning journeys via learning log homework; home/school challenges; participation in parent workshops/stay and play; social media and other online communication such as parent app; special books; development of wonder walls; participation on school trips and weekly homework activities and tasks.

Prior to entry to Nursery/Reception, parents/carers are invited to attend an individual meeting with teachers and support staff and given a tour of the learning environments. Reception parents meetings take place in Autumn and Spring term where progress is discussed and SEND Pupil Profiles shared. During Spring term parent meetings, Reception parents/carers are given mid-year targets and supporting materials for their child to ensure their continued progression in the Summer term. Nursery parent meetings take place in Spring Term. Annual reports are sent out at the end of the year and Parents/carers are offered the opportunity to discuss these with teachers in July.

#### Review

Review of this Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on current practice and ensures that approaches remain aligned with the EYFS statutory framework and our Emmaus EYFS vision. Ongoing monitoring and feedback from staff, parents, and children will continue to inform future revisions to maintain high-quality teaching and learning experiences for our youngest learners at Emmaus.

Review date: September 2026