



A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education

Introduction and Vision

Emmaus Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children who join Nursery after their third birthday and children in Reception during the school year in which they turn five. The EYFS continues until the end of the Reception year.

At Emmaus, we advocate that the Early Years Foundation Stage is a critical period in a child's development, during which the foundations for future learning, wellbeing and success are established. We believe that high-quality Early Years education can make a lasting difference, so our responsibility extends beyond preparing children for their next year in school. Through nurturing relationships, an ambitious curriculum and rich experiences, we aim to give every child the best possible start in life and build the foundations upon which future learning and wellbeing can be built.

Our Early Years vision is rooted in the school mission, 'Travelling together with Jesus', and in our core values of Love, Hope, Trust and Friendship. We want children to become confident, ambitious, compassionate and increasingly independent learners who are well prepared for the next stage of education and for life beyond school.

We are committed to ensuring that every child develops secure foundations in communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; physical development; literacy and mathematics, alongside the curiosity, confidence, independence and relationships that enable them to thrive.

Our philosophy is consistent with the principles of the national 'Best Start in Life' agenda and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to education and the right for education to develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest.

Aims

- Provide every child with a happy, positive and secure start to school life and foster a lifelong love of learning.
- Plan a high-quality, inclusive and ambitious curriculum which builds progressively from Nursery through Reception and supports a successful transition into Year One.
- Provide safe, stimulating and nurturing indoor and outdoor environments which promote curiosity, independence and challenge.
- Place communication and language, personal development and physical development at the heart of early learning.
- Ensure that children develop secure foundations in early reading, writing and mathematics.
- Value the importance of play, first-hand experience, exploration, sustained shared thinking and high-quality adult interaction.

- Identify and respond to individual needs early, making reasonable adjustments so that all children can participate meaningfully and make progress.
- Enable children to develop confidence, resilience, self-regulation, creativity, collaboration and the ability to manage appropriate risk.
- Work in respectful partnership with parents/carers, recognising them as children's first and most enduring educators.
- Reflect and celebrate the diversity of children, families, cultures, communities and experiences represented within our school.

Statutory Framework and Principles

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers (September 2026), Development Matters (2023) and the school's associated safeguarding, SEND, health and safety and curriculum policies.

Our practice reflects the four overarching principles of the EYFS:

- *A unique child* – every child is a unique learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- *Positive relationships* – children learn to be strong and independent through secure, warm and responsive relationships.
- *Enabling environments* – children learn and develop well in environments that respond to their needs, interests and experiences, with strong partnerships between practitioners and families.
- *Learning and development* – children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The characteristics of effective teaching and learning underpin our approach:

playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Our Early Years Curriculum

At Emmaus, we provide an ambitious, inclusive and carefully sequenced Early Years curriculum which reflects our school mission 'Travelling Together with Jesus' and our core values of Love, Hope, Trust and Friendship. Our curriculum is intrinsically linked to our whole-school curriculum drivers of Gospel Values, Cultural Capital, Diversity, Independence and High Expectations.

Our curriculum encompasses everything we want children to experience, learn, know and be able to do during their time in Nursery and Reception. It meets the educational programmes set out within the Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (2026) and is informed by Development Matters (2023).

We recognise Early Years as a distinctive and important phase of education in its own right. While we ensure that children develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions that provide secure foundations

for future learning, our curriculum is not simply preparation for Key Stage 1. We value children's experiences in the present and provide opportunities for them to be curious, imaginative, confident and active learners.

Curriculum Intent

In Emmaus Early Years Foundation Stage, no one walks alone. We want every child to feel known, valued, safe and inspired to learn and to develop the confidence, curiosity and compassion they need to flourish, now and in the future.

Our EYFS curriculum reflects the beliefs and core values outlined above. We nurture the whole child — spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and academically — through meaningful relationships, rich experiences and an environment in which children are encouraged to wonder, explore, question, create and grow.

High expectations for every child underpins our curriculum. We recognise that children develop in different ways and at different rates, but we do not allow these differences to limit ambition. Instead, staff adapt teaching and provision so that all children can access a rich, inclusive curriculum and experience success.

Through carefully sequenced learning, responsive teaching and strong partnerships with families, we aim for children to leave Emmaus Early Years Foundation Stage as confident, compassionate, ambitious and increasingly independent learners, equipped with secure foundations for future learning and the values to contribute positively to an ever-changing world.

We intend for our curriculum to:

- build securely on each child's individual starting points, experiences, interests and prior knowledge
- develop confident communicators through a strong emphasis on language, vocabulary, conversation, stories and sustained interactions.
- promote independence, resilience, self-regulation and positive relationships.
- establish secure foundations in early reading, writing and mathematics.
- develop curiosity about the world, encouraging children to notice, question, investigate and make connections.
- provide rich first-hand experiences, including regular opportunities to learn outdoors and through Forest School.
- broaden children's experiences and cultural capital, introducing them to people, places, traditions, ideas and experiences beyond those already familiar to them.
- ensure that diversity is visible, valued and celebrated so that children develop respect for themselves, others and the communities to which they belong.
- provide an ambitious curriculum for all, with appropriate support and challenge so that every child can participate, succeed and make progress.
- foster creativity, imagination and the confidence to express ideas in different ways.
- help children to develop care, responsibility and respect for other people and for the natural world
- develop the knowledge, skills and learning behaviours children need to make confident and successful transitions through Nursery, Reception and into Year One.

Curriculum Progression

Our EYFS curriculum is carefully sequenced from Nursery through Reception and cross-referenced with the Year One National Curriculum Programme of Study so that children revisit, strengthen and extend important knowledge and skills over time.

Our EYFS knowledge progression and skills progression documents identify the key learning we intend children to acquire across key areas of learning and demonstrate how these foundations connect with subsequent learning in Year One.

Progression in EYFS is not understood as a rigid or linear pathway. Children develop at different rates and in different ways. The EYFS team use their professional knowledge of each child to adapt teaching and provision while maintaining ambitious expectations for all.

We prioritise depth, security and meaningful application rather than moving children rapidly through content. Children are provided with repeated opportunities to encounter important concepts, vocabulary and skills in different contexts so that learning becomes increasingly secure and transferable.

Curriculum Implementation

In Emmaus EYFS, play is essential for children's development. Through purposeful play experiences, children explore ideas, practise skills, solve problems, communicate, collaborate, take manageable risks, express feelings and make sense of the world. In Nursery and Reception, play sits alongside high-quality adult interaction, guided learning and direct teaching as part of a bespoke approach to curriculum implementation. Children learn through a carefully considered balance of:

- purposeful play and independent exploration.
- high-quality interactions with knowledgeable adults.
- direct and explicit teaching.
- guided and small-group learning.
- carefully planned continuous and enhanced provision.
- stories, rhymes, songs and high-quality texts.
- first-hand practical experiences.
- indoor and outdoor learning.
- Forest School and experiences within the natural environment.
- opportunities to revisit and apply previous learning.
- responsive experiences which build upon children's interests, questions and fascinations.

Effective pedagogy in Emmaus EYFS does not rely upon one approach. The Early Years team recognise when children benefit from independent exploration and when sensitive adult interaction, modelling, explanation, questioning or direct teaching will move learning forward.

Our indoor and outdoor learning environments are thoughtfully organised to enable children to make choices, develop independence, revisit learning and practise newly acquired knowledge and skills. Continuous provision is deliberately planned and reviewed so that it contributes directly to curriculum intentions rather than simply providing activities for children to complete.

EYFS staff introduce rich and precise vocabulary throughout the curriculum and place particular importance on sustained back-and-forth interactions. Adults model language, thinking and learning; sensitively extending children's ideas and helping them make connections between new experiences and what they already know.

Curriculum Impact

The impact of our EYFS curriculum is evident in the progress children make from their individual starting points and in the knowledge, skills, understanding and learning behaviours they develop over time. We are proud that children leave Emmaus Early Years Foundation Stage as confident, curious and increasingly independent learners who:

- are well prepared emotionally, socially and academically for the next stage of development and longer-term success in life.
- communicate effectively in a range of situations and develop positive relationships.
- demonstrate resilience, perseverance and increasing self-regulation.
- possess secure foundations in early reading, writing and mathematics.
- draw upon and use a growing body of knowledge and vocabulary.
- make connections between experiences and prior learning.
- use their knowledge and skills purposefully within play and wider contexts.
- show curiosity and respect for people, communities and the natural world.
- express themselves politely, creatively and imaginatively.

Staff continually evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the curriculum through their knowledge of children, assessment information, professional discussion and monitoring of teaching and provision. Curriculum planning and provision may be adapted where necessary to ensure that all children have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Communication and Language

In EYFS at Emmaus, we recognise how fundamental communication and language is for children's learning, relationships and future success. Developing children's ability to listen, understand, speak and communicate confidently and respectfully is a priority throughout Nursery and Reception.

Language development is woven through the whole curriculum and takes place through meaningful conversations, stories, songs, rhymes, play, routines and direct teaching. The EYFS team provide children with frequent opportunities to hear, use and revisit rich vocabulary in a range of contexts.

Adults skilfully support communication and language by:

- engaging children in warm, responsive and sustained back-and-forth interactions.
- modelling clear, accurate and increasingly rich language.
- introducing and revisiting new vocabulary with purpose and intent.
- allowing children time to process, think and respond.
- extending children's language through comments, repetition, expansion and modelling.
- using stories, rhymes, songs and high-quality texts to broaden language and understanding.
- creating opportunities for children to explain ideas, retell experiences, ask questions and take part in purposeful conversation.
- adapting communication approaches to meet individual needs.

We recognise that children communicate in different ways and at different stages of their development. Emmaus EYFS staff respond sensitively to individual communication profiles and ensure that every child has meaningful opportunities to participate, express themselves and be understood. Through this approach, staff aim to develop children who are increasingly confident communicators, able to listen, understand, express ideas and use language effectively across their learning and relationships. Staff are alert to children who may require additional support with communication and language. Needs are identified as early as possible through observation, professional judgement, assessment and discussion with families. Where appropriate, targeted approaches and interventions are used to support progress, alongside high-quality universal provision. These may include tools and strategies such as WellComm, ShREC, Gestalt Language Processors, BSL and Makaton, together with advice from the SENCO, Speech and Language Therapy services and other professionals where required.

Early Reading, Phonics and Handwriting

Fostering a love of books, stories, rhymes and language is central to our EYFS provision. Every day, children encounter a wide range of high-quality texts across our provision and are encouraged to talk about, retell, recreate and respond to what they hear and read.

In Reception, systematic synthetic phonics is taught through Read Write Inc. Phonics. Children are assessed regularly so that teaching can be matched closely to need. Practice in reading, oral blending, segmenting, word recognition and fluency is reinforced across the curriculum and through home reading.

Writing in Emmaus Early Years develops from talk, play, mark-making and meaningful opportunities to communicate. Children in Nursery and Reception are supported to compose ideas orally, develop transcription skills and increasingly write for a range of purposes. Our separate Early Years handwriting and pre-handwriting guidance sets out the progression from gross and fine-motor development through to pencil control and letter formation.

Mathematics

Mathematics is developed through daily practical experiences, purposeful play, explicit teaching, mathematical talk and opportunities to notice, explore, represent and explain patterns and relationships.

Children in Nursery and Reception are encouraged to reason, make connections, solve problems and use mathematical language. Practitioners have prioritised space and time to revisit important concepts every week, as well as providing appropriate representations and concrete resources so that learning becomes secure rather than accelerated prematurely.

We place particular emphasis on developing a deep understanding of number, including subitising, cardinality, composition, comparison and numerical relationships, alongside pattern, shape, space and measure. In Reception, Maths Mastery approaches and NCETM-informed professional development strengthen consistent, conceptually secure teaching.

The role of the adult

At Emmaus, we know that warm, responsive and knowledgeable adults are central to high-quality Early Years practice. Secure relationships enable children to feel safe, valued and confident to explore, communicate, take risks and learn.

Our well-established and highly experienced Early Years team know our children, families and community well and use their professional judgement to decide when to observe, model, question, explain, teach, play alongside, extend learning or step back. Effective practice therefore involves a carefully considered balance between child-initiated learning, adult-guided experiences and direct teaching. Nursery and Reception staff act as observers, communicators, models, teachers, co-players, questioners and assessors. They know when to join play, when to extend thinking, when to introduce vocabulary or knowledge and when to allow children time and space to pursue their own ideas.

Adults support learning by:

- building secure, trusting and respectful relationships with every child.
- modelling positive relationships, kindness, independence, curiosity and resilience.
- engaging children in meaningful back-and-forth conversations.
- introducing and modelling rich, precise vocabulary.
- listening carefully to children's ideas, questions and explanations.
- observing children closely to understand what they know, can do and what interests/motivates them.
- joining children's play sensitively and extending learning where appropriate.
- modelling skills, strategies and ways of thinking.
- asking thoughtful questions which encourage children to explain, predict, reason and make connections.
- providing direct teaching where explicit instruction is the most effective way to support learning.
- noticing misconceptions or gaps in understanding and responding appropriately.
- supporting children to revisit, practise and apply previous learning.
- adapting interactions and teaching to meet individual communication, developmental and learning needs.
- encouraging children to persevere, solve problems, make choices and increasingly manage their own learning.

High-quality interaction is a priority for our Emmaus Early Years team. Staff recognise that everyday conversations, routines and play provide valuable opportunities for learning. Staff tune into children's interests and communication, allowing time for them to think, respond and develop their ideas. Through modelling, commenting, repetition, expansion and carefully chosen questions, adults extend children's language and thinking and create opportunities for sustained shared thinking. Staff observe carefully before intervening, considering whether adult involvement will add value to learning. At times, this may mean modelling or extending an idea; at others, stepping back so children can investigate, collaborate, persevere and develop their own solutions. This sensitive balance supports children in becoming confident, independent and self-motivated learners.

All Early Years teaching staff have responsibility for the effective implementation of the curriculum. Adults understand the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary being developed and use this knowledge to make purposeful decisions throughout the day. They make connections between planned curriculum intentions and the spontaneous opportunities which arise through children's play and interests.

Effective Early Years practice depends upon strong teamwork. Teachers and support staff share relevant observations and professional knowledge so that there is consistency in expectations, interactions and support for children. The Early Years Lead promotes reflective practice through professional dialogue, modelling, coaching, monitoring and continuing professional development. Staff are encouraged to reflect upon the impact of their interactions and remain open to developing their practice.

Through skilled, sensitive and purposeful adult involvement, we aim to ensure that every child at Emmaus feels known, valued, challenged and supported to flourish.

Enabling Environments

We provide purposeful, attractive, organised and stimulating indoor and outdoor environments in which children feel secure, confident and appropriately challenged. Continuous provision is carefully planned so that children can revisit, practice and apply learning independently.

Resources, books and displays reflect the diversity of children, families and communities and are selected to avoid stereotypes. Environments are reviewed and adapted so that they are accessible to children with differing physical, sensory, communication and learning needs.

Outdoor learning is an integral part of our curriculum rather than an addition to it. Children have daily opportunities to learn outdoors across all seasons of the year and clothing suitable for the weather is part of our Nursery and Reception uniform. This ensures that every child has access to appropriate waterproof clothing and wellington boots every day in EYFS.

Forest School and nature-based learning are distinctive features of Emmaus Early Years Foundation Stage. Through regular outdoor experiences, children develop curiosity, confidence, resilience, physical competence, problem-solving, teamwork, managed risk-taking and respectful connection with the natural world.

Assessment

At Emmaus, assessment is an integral part of effective teaching and learning in the Early Years. It enables practitioners to understand what children know, understand and can do, to identify individual strengths and barriers to learning and to make informed decisions about what children need to learn next.

Assessment is purposeful, proportionate and rooted in practitioners' professional knowledge of each child. It is not dependent on the unnecessary collection of written or photographic evidence. EYFS staff build an accurate picture of children's learning through their day-to-day interactions, observations, conversations, children's work and responses during both adult-led and child-initiated learning.

Assessment information is used to:

- establish children's starting points.
- identify what children know and can do and where there may be gaps in learning.
- inform teaching, curriculum planning and enhancements to provision.
- ensure appropriate support and challenge.
- identify emerging additional needs at the earliest opportunity.
- evaluate the impact of teaching and interventions.
- monitor the progress of individuals and groups of children.

- support effective communication with parents/carers and other professionals.
- ensure continuity of learning as children move through Nursery, Reception and into Year One.

Starting points and ongoing Assessment

When children enter Nursery, staff establish their starting points through crucial information gathering from families, previous settings where appropriate, professional observation and interaction with the child. Wellcomm is used to establish a baseline for each individual child's developmental level in communication and language and re-assessed termly.

In Reception, the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment is completed within the first six weeks of children starting school. Reception staff also use their wider professional knowledge of children to establish their individual starting points across the curriculum.

Development Matters (2023) is used to support professional understanding of typical development and curriculum progression. It is not used as a checklist or as a system for generating large quantities of evidence.

Ongoing formative assessment takes place continually through teaching, interaction and observation. The EYFS team notice what children can do independently, how securely they apply their knowledge and skills, and where further modelling, teaching, practice or support may be required.

More focused assessment tools may be used where they provide useful diagnostic information. These include assessments associated with our approaches to phonics, mathematics, communication and language and specific interventions for individual children.

Pupil Progress and Responsive Provision

EYFS assessment leads directly to action. Where gaps or concerns are identified, practitioners adapt teaching, interactions, the learning environment or provision and, where appropriate, put targeted support in place. Children's learning and progress is reviewed regularly through professional dialogue within the Early Years team and with Senior Leaders.

Formal Pupil Progress Meetings take place for both Nursery and Reception staff with Senior leaders, including SENCO. These provide valuable opportunities for professional dialogue to consider:

- children's progress from their individual starting points.
- attainment across the areas of learning.
- patterns or gaps in knowledge and skills.
- children who may require additional support or greater challenge.
- the effectiveness of current provision and intervention.
- barriers to learning, including communication, SEND, attendance or wider contextual factors.
- agreed next steps for teaching, provision and support.

Working in Partnership with Families

At Emmaus, we recognise parents/carers as children's first and most enduring educators. Warm, respectful and professional relationships between home and school are central to children's wellbeing, learning and development. Partnership begins before admission through visits, meetings and transition opportunities. Families are encouraged to share information about their child's

interests, experiences, strengths, needs, home language, culture and family context so that provision can be responsive and respectful. Parents/carers have regular opportunities to discuss progress, contribute to their child's learning and share information from home. Communication includes informal conversations, termly parent meetings, learning information, home-learning opportunities, school communications and celebration events.

Where concerns arise about a child's development, learning or wellbeing, Emmaus EYFS staff work collaboratively with families to agree appropriate next steps, involving the SENCO or other professionals where necessary. We are committed to maintaining accessible, inclusive and two-way communication so that all families feel listened to, valued and able to participate fully in their child's Emmaus Early Years experience.

Statutory Assessment at the End of Reception

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is completed for every child at the end of Reception in accordance with statutory requirements. Reception staff use their professional knowledge and a broad range of evidence gained through everyday teaching and learning to determine whether children have met each Early Learning Goal. EYFSP outcomes are shared with parents/carers and reported at the end of the Reception year.

EYFSP information, alongside the Reception team's wider knowledge of each child, is shared with the Year One team to support a smooth transition and ensure continuity in learning, provision and any additional support.

For children with SEND, assessment recognises individual progress and achievement alongside statutory requirements. Relevant information about reasonable adjustments, strategies, interventions and successful approaches to learning is shared during transition.

Professional Development and Reflective Practice

We know that skilled and knowledgeable EYFS staff have the greatest influence on the quality of Early Years provision. The Emmaus Early Years team are encouraged to be reflective practitioners who evaluate their own practice, engage in professional dialogue and remain open to feedback and new learning.

Professional development is informed by:

- monitoring and evaluation.
- emerging needs within cohorts of children.
- developments in Early Years research and guidance.
- statutory, local and school priorities.
- Early Years improvement planning.
- practitioners' individual professional development needs.

The Early Years Lead supports the development of staff through coaching, modelling, professional discussion, sourcing relevant training and seeking opportunities to share effective practice. Learning from continuing professional development is expected to inform classroom practice and contribute to sustained improvements in provision.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Evaluation is an ongoing process. The Early Years team regularly reflects upon the effectiveness of the curriculum, teaching, interventions, environment and wider provision. This evaluation is informed by a range of evidence including:

- children's progress and outcomes.
- analysis of EYFS Profile and other relevant assessment information.
- cohort and contextual information.
- monitoring of teaching and learning.
- feedback and professional discussion within the Early Years team.
- the experiences and needs of children and families.
- local and national Early Years priorities.

Findings from monitoring and evaluation inform the Early Years Action Plan and wider school improvement priorities. Priorities are reviewed regularly to consider the impact of actions taken and to identify appropriate next steps. This ensures that Early Years provision at Emmaus continues to evolve in response to the children we serve, while maintaining consistently high expectations for teaching, learning and care.

Leadership therefore operates as a continuous cycle of: identify → plan → implement → monitor → evaluate → refine. Through this reflective approach, we aim to sustain what is working well, respond promptly where improvement is needed and continually strengthen the quality of education and care provided for every child.

Inclusion and SEND

At Emmaus, we are committed to providing an inclusive Early Years experience in which every child is valued, respected and supported to participate fully in the life and learning of the setting. We recognise that children develop in different ways and at different rates, and that some children may require additional or different support in order to access the curriculum and make progress. High expectations are maintained for all children, with teaching, interactions, routines and provision adapted where necessary to remove barriers to learning.

Inclusive practice begins with high-quality universal provision. The Early Years team seek to create environments, routines and learning experiences which are accessible and responsive to a wide range of needs from the outset.

This may include:

- adapting teaching, interactions and levels of adult support.
- using visual, communication and sensory supports.
- making reasonable adjustments to the environment and routines.
- providing additional opportunities for repetition, practice and consolidation.
- adapting resources and learning experiences.
- using children's strengths, interests and preferred ways of engaging to support learning.
- providing targeted intervention where this is appropriate.

Staff talk, play and observe children closely and use their professional knowledge, assessment information and discussion with families to identify emerging needs at the earliest opportunity. Where concerns arise, the Early Years team works closely with the school SENCO and these are shared sensitively with parents/carers and appropriate next steps are agreed. Where appropriate, external professionals may be involved to ensure that support is coordinated and responsive to the individual child.

Children with SEND are supported to access the full Early Years curriculum, including play, outdoor learning, Forest School, educational visits and wider experiences, with reasonable adjustments made where required. Parent/carers are central partners. Where a child enters Emmaus with an identified SEND need, staff work with families, previous settings and relevant professionals to understand the child's strengths and needs and establish effective support as early as possible. EYFS staff consider not only the barriers a child may face, but also the approaches, relationships and environments that enable them to participate, communicate and learn successfully. Provision and progress are reviewed regularly and support is adapted in response to what is working well and what the child needs next. Through this inclusive approach, we aim for every child to experience belonging, success, appropriate challenge and meaningful progress from their individual starting points.

Transition

At Emmaus, we recognise that successful transition is a process rather than a single event. We aim to ensure that children feel secure, understood and well prepared as they move from home into Nursery, from Nursery into Reception and from Reception into Year One. Transition is supported through strong relationships, effective communication and close partnership between children, families and staff.

Our approach includes:

- opportunities for children and families to become familiar with new environments, routines and adults.
- one to one induction meetings, visits and stay-and-play opportunities.
- sharing relevant information between families, staff and previous or receiving settings.
- transition meetings between Nursery, Reception and Year One staff.
- careful consideration of individual needs, including SEND, communication, sensory and emotional needs.
- continuity in approaches, routines and successful strategies where appropriate.
- additional transition support for children who may require it.

We place particular importance on curriculum continuity. Staff work collaboratively across Nursery, Reception and Year One to build on children's prior learning and ensure that progression in knowledge, skills and learning behaviours is coherent.

Information shared at transition meetings includes children's strengths, interests, progress, effective strategies, areas requiring further support and any relevant assessment information. This enables receiving staff to build on what children already know and can do. For children with SEND or additional needs, transition planning may begin earlier and involve families, the SENCO and relevant professionals to ensure that appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are in place. Parents and carers are valued as key partners throughout the transition process. Their knowledge of their

child is used to support planning and help Emmaus staff to understand how best to promote security, confidence and continuity. Through careful and responsive transition arrangements, we aim for children to move confidently between stages, maintaining a strong sense of belonging while being gently supported to embrace new experiences and expectations.

Personal Development and Behaviour

In EYFS at Emmaus, positive behaviour is supported through secure relationships, consistent routines, clear expectations, co-regulation and developmentally appropriate teaching about emotions, relationships and choices. EYFS staff seek to understand the communication and underlying need behind behaviour and respond in ways that preserve dignity and safety.

Where concerns arise, staff work with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the SENCO or other professionals to agree supportive strategies. Significant incidents and safeguarding-related concerns are recorded in line with whole-school procedures. This policy should be read alongside the school Behaviour Policy.

Leadership, Monitoring and Evaluation

Strong and reflective leadership is central to maintaining and developing high-quality Early Years provision at Emmaus. The Early Years Lead, working alongside the Senior Leadership Team and Early Years staff, provides a clear vision for Nursery and Reception which reflects the school mission, the statutory requirements of the EYFS and the needs of the children and families within our school community.

Leadership within Emmaus Early Years is focused on ensuring that:

- children receive a consistently high-quality, ambitious and inclusive curriculum.
- teaching, interactions and provision enable all children to learn and make progress.
- curriculum progression from Nursery through Reception and into Year One is coherent and purposeful.
- children who may be at risk of falling behind are identified promptly and receive appropriate support. A 'keep up, not catch-up' ethos pervades all intervention.
- staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence to meet the needs of all children.
- indoor and outdoor learning environments support the intended curriculum.
- statutory requirements for learning, development, safeguarding and welfare are consistently met.
- improvement priorities are informed by evidence and lead to meaningful improvements in children's experiences and outcomes.

Monitoring Teaching and Learning

Monitoring within Early Years is supportive, developmental and purposeful. Its primary aim is to understand the quality and consistency of children's experiences across Nursery and Reception, identifying strengths and areas for further development.

The Early Years Lead develops a clear picture of provision through a range of monitoring strategies, which may include:

- learning walks and informal visits.
- observation of teaching, play and adult-child interactions.
- professional dialogue with practitioners.
- review of curriculum planning and progression.

- monitoring the quality and impact of continuous and enhanced provision.
- consideration of children's learning, responses and assessment information.
- Nursery and Reception pupil progress meetings.
- review of provision and outcomes for children with SEND and other identified groups.
- consideration of children's engagement, independence and application of learning.

Monitoring focuses not simply on what adults are doing, but on what children are learning as a result. Particular attention is given to the quality of adult interactions, communication and language, agreed approaches to early reading, writing and mathematics and the effectiveness of provision in enabling children to revisit, practice and deepen their learning.

Findings are shared and discussed to inform ongoing decisions around professional development, coaching, resourcing and the Early Years action plan. Priorities are reviewed regularly to evaluate the impact of agreed actions and identify appropriate next steps.

The Emmaus Early Years team engages with relevant professional development, local authority and school improvement networks, research and national developments. Opportunities for external quality assurance, including renewal of the Early Years Quality Mark, are considered where they support continued improvement.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at Emmaus. The Early Years Foundation Stage meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework (2026) and follows Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and must read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026: Part One in full. Staff understand how to recognise and respond to concerns and disclosures, how to share information appropriately and how to follow school procedures for allegations, low-level concerns and whistleblowing.

Children are supported to understand boundaries, rules, personal safety and how to manage appropriate risk. Early Years staff working with children are subject to the required suitability checks. School systems are used for safeguarding records, and only authorised school devices are used to capture images or evidence of children in accordance with policy and parental permissions. Children are released only to adults authorised by parents/carers. Nursery and Reception operate agreed collection and password procedures in line with school safeguarding arrangements.

The 2026 EYFS statutory framework includes updated safeguarding expectations, including regard to guidance on screen use for children aged five and under. Emmaus EYFS team ensures that any relevant provision and procedures reflect the current statutory framework.

Health, Nutrition, Oral Health and First Aid

Emmaus Early Years Team promotes good physical health through everyday routines, curriculum experiences and partnership with families. Drinking water is available throughout the day and healthy snacks are provided or encouraged in line with school arrangements.

Where food, snacks or drinks are provided, the school has regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance and follows it unless there is good reason not to. Dietary needs, food allergies and

intolerances are recorded and managed in accordance with school procedures.

Oral health is promoted through age-appropriate teaching and through the introduction of the Altogether Smiling supervised toothbrushing programme in Nursery and Reception. This will be rolled out over 2026-27, subject to parental consent and the programme's hygiene and implementation protocols.

Paediatric First Aid provision meets statutory requirements. Accidents and injuries are recorded and parents/carers are informed in accordance with school procedures. The Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and Intimate Care Policy should be read alongside this policy.

Safety, Premises, Risk and Educational Visits

Indoor and outdoor spaces, furniture, equipment and resources are maintained so that they are suitable for the age and needs of children. Daily checks and appropriate risk assessments are used to identify hazards and ensure that risks are managed effectively without removing valuable opportunities for challenge and managed risk-taking.

Educational visits and off-site experiences enrich the EYFS curriculum. Visits are planned and risk assessed in accordance with the school Educational Visits Policy and the needs, ages and vulnerabilities of the children attending. We strictly adhere to the statutory staff-to-child ratios defined by the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework as an absolute minimum. These minimum baselines include: Nursery: A minimum ratio of 1:8. This is adjusted to 1:13 with the Nursery teacher present. Reception: A ratio of 1:30 per school teacher, in strict alignment with statutory infant class size legislation.

While we maintain statutory ratios as a baseline, we do not apply a single fixed ratio universally to every educational visit. In accordance with regulatory requirements, Nursery and Reception staff complete a full, documented risk assessment, which is approved prior to the visit happening.

Information and Records

Records are maintained, where required, for the safe and effective management of the EYFS department and to support children's learning, development and wellbeing. Personal information is handled sensitively and stored securely in accordance with school data protection and confidentiality procedures.

Information is shared with parents, colleagues and external agencies on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with safeguarding, data protection and information-sharing requirements.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the Emmaus community are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside the following statutory guidance and Emmaus documents, as applicable:

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for school-based providers (2026)
- Development Matters (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance (2025)
- Early Years Handbook
- Early Years Knowledge Progression: Nursery – Reception – Year 1
- Early Years Skills Progression: Nursery – Reception – Year 1
- Early Years Teaching and Learning Statement / Policy
- Early Years Assessment documentation
- Early Years Handwriting and Pre-Handwriting Statement
- Early Years Transition Policy
- Forest School Policy
- Long-term plans and curriculum maps
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND and Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Equality and Accessibility documentation
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use documentation
- Complaints Procedure

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Early Years Lead, or sooner, where changes to statutory requirements, safeguarding guidance or school provision make this necessary.