Crakehall CE Primary School
The Green
Crakehall
Bedale,
North Yorkshire, DL8 1HP

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy (October 2026)

Foundation Stage at Crakehall Church of England Primary School

"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. 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 Children, Schools and Families (2025)

Vision

Our school vision begins from each child's first day in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Through the education that we provide, we have a vision that each child will leave their primary school career with the following values and attributes.

We believe in Growing Together:

Growing together to…

- **Build strength through resilience**
- **Value myself and others**
- **Understand the world around us**

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (2026) and non-statutory guidance from Development Matters (2023).

Transition

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) includes all children from birth to the end of their reception year. We welcome children into our Foundation Stage (FS) class the September after they turn four years old.

Supporting transition into Foundation Stage:
Parents of children who are offered a place in Foundation Stage at Crakehall are invited to an induction meeting in the Summer term. This is an opportunity to meet members of the Senior Leadership Team and the EYFS staff, get to know more about our EYFS curriculum and our school's vision and values. Families are provided with a pack including a wealth of information about our school, some essential forms and some guidance on how to best prepare your child for school. School staff, usually the class teacher, will visit your child at their nursery to establish a relationship with them and to gather essential information about your child's learning and development from their key worker. All families will be offered a home visit to provide an extra opportunity to meet children as well as a chance for parents/carers to share any information that they feel is important. Children will be invited to visit school at least once in the summer term to have a taster session. Further transition points will be added if necessary.

Supporting transition into Year One:
Towards the end of the Foundation Stage year, pupils will be given opportunities to spend time with their Year 1 teacher to support their wellbeing. Pupils will be supported to become 'Year One ready' through more formal learning opportunities. This provides the children with time to build positive relationships with their new teacher and teaching assistant, gain confidence and an opportunity to learn new routines.

Four overarching principles shape our practice in FS:

- We view every child as a unique child
- We teach children to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- We provide an enabling environment for children learn and develop well
- We understand the importance of learning and development. We know that children develop and learn at different rates and ensure that our classroom is inclusive to all needs.

The Unique Child

"Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured." – Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2025)

We recognise that children are constantly learning and developing. We know that children develop in different ways, at different rates. We believe in working with families to get to know each unique child holistically, so that we can provide the right learning opportunities for children to make progress according to their individual needs. We are passionate about instilling a positive attitude to learning and do this by using praise and encouragement, and modelling an inquisitive, enthusiastic attitude ourselves.

Positive Relationships

"Children are born with a natural desire to explore and learn and practitioners can support them in this. We do this by creating an enabling environment (both physical and emotional) and through the relationships and interactions that the children experience" – Anna Ephgrave (2015)

We believe that children learn best when they feel valued and cared for. Positive relationships are established with children as part of their transition to school, ensuring that they feel happy and settled when starting school. We model positive relationships between staff and encourage positive relationships between pupils. Staff aim to develop strong, professional and warm relationships with children and their families.

An Enabling Environment

"The teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child." – Maria Montessori

We use our understanding of the uniqueness of each child to provide an environment that meets emerging needs. The classroom is carefully set up with resources and opportunities for pupils to make progress based on their stage of development and expected levels of development, or Early Learning Goals. The environment is adjusted regularly, according to assessments made of children and to pursue the interests of pupils. Children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up with planned continuous provision. Learning through play is the foundation to our education in EYFS and resources and challenges are carefully selected to facilitate development. We encourage children to make their own choices of which areas of the provision to visit and which activities to pursue as we believe that this provides independent and conscientious learning.

Inclusion

"Children should have a great deal of freedom to learn in ways that are uniquely suited to them." – Anna Ephgrave

As we value the diversity of individuals across the whole school, this also applies within the EYFS. All children in the Foundation Stage are treated fairly and equally, regardless of religion, race or ability. Every child matters and is given an opportunity to thrive in our setting. We take life experience and cultural capital into consideration when planning and set realistic and aspirational expectations to meet the needs of all children. Children with special educational needs or disabilities are carefully planned for to ensure that they are able to access the same learning as all other children.

We meet the needs of all children by:

- Carefully planning learning opportunities that are progressive – they build upon and extend current knowledge, experience and interest
- Ensuring children are able to access such learning opportunities without having their self-esteem or confidence compromised
- Motivating pupils to become 'inquisitive learners' as per our school vision

- Providing a learning environment that is safe – safeguarding policies and procedures are followed
- Resources reflect diversity and free from discrimination and stereotypes
- Rigorous, constant assessment of children's progress that informs future planning
- Communicating successes and emergent needs of children with their families
- Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) are supported with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and regular assessment against individual targets. The school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) supports staff to ensure that needs are met and barriers to learning are identified and removed.

Cultural Capital

"Cultural capital is the essential knowledge that children need to prepare them for their future success. It is about giving children the best possible start to their early education." – Ofsted (2022)

We strive to provide all children with a wealth of experience of the world during their time in EYFS. We do this by inviting people into our school to talk to children about different cultural and religious customs and celebrations, by exploring the world through books and technology and by taking our children to experience different environments.

Key Person

A key person is a member of staff who has responsibilities for a small group of children. They are the go-to person for the children's families and help to track the progress of their key children. In Foundation Stage, this role is fulfilled by the class teacher and teaching assistants.

A Positive Partnership

We understand that parents/carers are their child's first and most enduring educators and so value the role that they have in their child's learning journey. We encourage a collaborative, positive partnership by:

- Creating parent/carer accounts on Tapestry so that parents are regularly updated with classroom events and key moments of progression
- Having an 'open door' policy to ensure that staff are accessible for any queries or concerns
- Approaching parents/carers as soon as it becomes apparent that their child has an emergent need
- Inviting parents/carers in for Parent Teacher Consultations twice a year
- Providing a mid-year and final report of progress
- Sharing Reception Baseline Assessment reports with parents/carers
- Inviting parents/carers to our Phonics presentation evenings

Learning and Developing

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape provision in our Early Years setting. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others.

The three Prime areas are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Communication and Language
Physical Development

There are four 'specific' areas, through which the three prime areas are consolidated and applied:

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the world
Expressive arts and design

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Children learn through continuous provision; they are given the freedom to explore the classroom and shape their learning by choosing meaningful and purposeful activities. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are embedded within our EYFS provision:

- Playing and exploring
    - Children are given the opportunity to investigate and experience things and show a good 'have a go' attitude
- Active learning
    - Children are provided with the tools they need to concentrate and to be resilient when they encounter difficulties. They enjoy their achievement and have a good attitude to their learning
- Creating and thinking critically
    - Children are supported to develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies to achieve things.
- Adults support thinking by interacting with children. They share the experiences, respond to children, expand on their thoughts and sentences and have rich conversations.

Phonics and Early Reading

Children learn to read as early and as quickly as possible to allow them to read to learn.

We teach children to read through Systematic, Synthetic Phonics (SSP) by following a Department for Education validated programme; Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised. Children are taught to decode texts by applying their phonic knowledge, to read familiar text with prosody and to understand the texts they have read. We encourage a love of reading by providing children with 'Reading for Pleasure' time within school and providing a reading for pleasure book to take home with them each week. Children are rewarded for reading regularly by entering into our Reading Raffle. Staff share their love of reading with pupils by modelling an enthusiastic attitude and by regularly reading engaging stories.

Teaching SSP allows development in the following areas:

Reading

Children learn to:

- Correctly pronounce 44 phonemes (sounds) and identify the corresponding letter(s) (GPCs
- Read words by identifying GPCs and blending them together
- Read fluently and confidently using prosody
- Show that they comprehend texts they have read by answering questions

Writing

Children learn to:

- Identify how many phonemes are in a word and write the corresponding graphemes
- Correctly form the GPCs they have learnt by using engaging formation phrases to support them as they write
- Spell words correctly using their SSP knowledge
- Write full sentences

Children who are at risk of falling behind are given daily keep up sessions. Parents/carers are informed when children are identified of needing more support.

Fantastic Foundations

We believe in putting key aspects of communication at the heart of our teaching children to write. By implementing Fantastic Foundations, we nurture pupils' language acquisition by developing ideas, strengthening conversation and widening writing opportunities. Fantastic Foundations is based on three guiding principles:

Understanding the uniqueness of each child

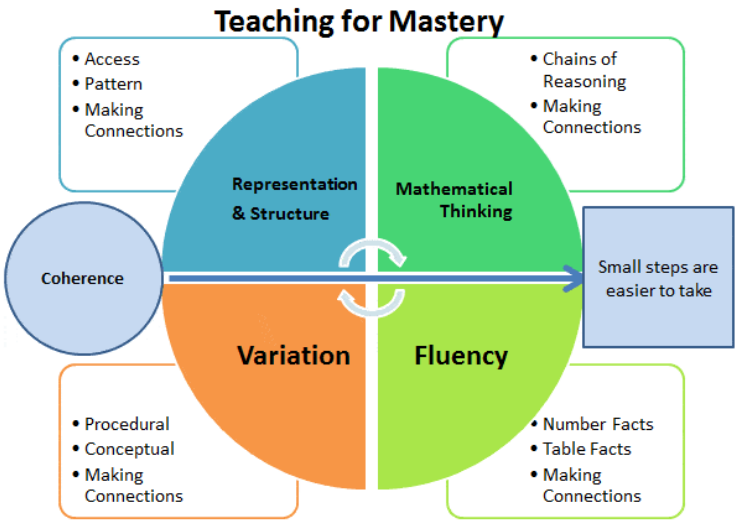
Nurturing deep talk and developing listening

Providing a rich repertoire of real and imagined experiences to ignite writing.

Mathematics

We follow a mastery approach to teaching mathematics.

Children follow a CPA approach when learning mathematical concepts. They explore concepts by using concrete resources, have access to a wide range of purposeful pictorial representations and learn to apply their knowledge to abstract problems and representations.



In Foundation Stage, we deliver the NCETM Mastering Number Programme.

Assessment

To ensure that we are delivering effective teaching and learning in EYFS, robust assessment is at the centre of our practice. In every interaction we have with a child and every observation we make of them interacting with the environment and/or other children, we are making an assessment of their development. We use these assessments to inform what is made available within the provision, our further interactions with the child and our future whole class teaching sessions. Key moments of progression are recorded on Tapestry.

In Foundation Stage, assessments are also made and recorded by:

- Delivering the Reception Baseline Assessment within the first few weeks of pupils starting school
- Half-termly SSP assessments
- Assessing pupil progress towards the Early Learning Goals by recording pupils as 'emerging' or 'expected' in the seven areas. This is recorded on Insight termly.
- At the end of the Foundation Stage year, an EYFS Profile is made that makes a final assessment of the Early Learning Goals
- Termly moderation meetings are held for EYFS teachers in the federation to moderate assessments and share good practice

Monitoring and Reviewing

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles outlined in this policy. The executive headteacher, head of school, EYFS lead and other senior leaders will carry out monitoring in the EYFS as part of the whole monitoring schedule.

		Comment
Date adopted by School Governing Body	19 October 2022	
Date reviewed	October 2026	Reviewed by ET & NR
Next review	October 2027	