The Park Federation Academy Trust
Montem Academy

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2026-2027

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Approval

Signed by CEO and Federation Principal on behalf of the Board of Directors	Mrs Helen Abell
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Section 1: Introduction

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 year 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. (Early years foundation stage statutory framework – September 2025)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Montem Academy, children will begin the Foundation Stage in Nursery in the term after they turn 3 years old. They will then continue their education by joining Reception the following September.

The EYFS is based upon four principles, as specified in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, effective September 2025:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults
- Children learn and develop at different rates. (See 'the characteristics of effective teaching and learning')

Section 2: A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the academy and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our academies.

Within our trust we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities and children from all social and cultural backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities and experiences to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in our care are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the academy's Inclusion policy for SEND. We work closely with outside agencies to provide children with tailored and targeted support. Children's home or first language is used, where appropriate, to support learning.

Safeguarding and welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them." (Early years foundation stage statutory framework – September 2025)

At The Park Federation Academy Trust we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the *Early years foundation stage statutory framework (September 2025)* We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare, safeguarding and good health of children.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Allocate a 'key person' to each child to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements, having regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023), 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales' (2023), and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2025).

Section 3: Positive Relationships

At the Park Federation Academy Trust, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with both children and their families.

Parents as Partners
We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.
We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children.
We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our academy;
- Organising a home visit to all families prior to starting the Nursery;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting before their child starts with the academy;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress throughout the Foundation Stage;
- Encouraging parents to talk to a member of staff if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher/key worker and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each academy year;
- Engage with parents, valuing their input, to gain a holistic picture of the child when completing initial baseline assessments.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, academy and parents: Celebrations, Sports Day, Open Days, Stay & Play sessions, Parent workshops, Coffee Mornings etc;

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Section 4: Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS will be based around half-termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning; however, individual teachers may alter the plans in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners understanding children's interests and what they know and can do, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for children that reflect that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners will make and act on their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

At Montem Academy, we record evidence and judgements against the EYFS Profile using ~~EYFS Target Tracker.~~ Insight Pupil tracking for Primary Schools. Each child's level of development is recorded against the assessment scales derived from the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written report to parents to share their child's progress against the ELGs and assessment scales.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classes have their own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and experiences for outdoors which mirrors and enhances learning taking place indoors to help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Section 5: Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our academies. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- Partnership between EYFS staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at the academy and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- Understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- Range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- Carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- Provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- Encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- Support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- Identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS Curriculum is made up of three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal Social & Emotional Development

There are also four specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area, there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development are all interconnected. The children's progress in these areas, which indicate ways in which they learn best, is communicated to parents and Year 1 teachers at the end of the Reception Year.

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

Play

"Children's play reflects their wide-ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development"

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Section 6: Transition

From Nursery to Reception

During the Summer Term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, parents are invited to a transition meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and the EYFS Curriculum, class allocation and have the opportunity to share any concerns they may want to express, which will ensure a smooth transition is made. Time will be allocated for professional dialogue between Nursery and Reception staff for those children transferring into the Reception classes. Children who attend Montem Nursery spend some time exploring the wider school environment and visit their new classrooms and teacher in preparation for the following year. Those children who join us from other settings will, where possible, be visited by a member of the Reception Team and EYFS Lead in their setting, where we will meet and observe the child and have a discussion with their key person.

From Reception to Key Stage One

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes ongoing observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key Characteristics of Effective Learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. Cross moderation between Reception & Year 1 teachers takes place to ensure that both year groups agree with the judgements given where appropriate.

Section 7: Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Principal and Director of Early Years will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of whole school monitoring.

All EYFS teachers will attend joint Park Federation termly moderation meetings to ensure consistency of teaching, learning and assessment.