

# Harwood Meadows Primary School



Foundation Stage  
Booklet  
2025/2026

# Mission Statement

Giving children  
roots to grow  
and wings to fly



# Welcome to Harwood Meadows



1. Policy Statement

2. About our unit

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum

4. What your child will need

5. Snacks and lunches

6. What can your child do now?

7. Useful information for you and for us

8. Helpful contacts

9. Conclusion



# Welcome to Harwood Meadows Foundation Stage

We welcome your child to our Foundation Stage unit. We hope that their stay with us is a happy and successful one.

As parents, you are your child's first educators. The home influence remains of paramount importance throughout your child's schooling. Links with parents help make school and learning part of a child's life rather than something separate and artificial.

The aim of the Foundation Stage is to further the all round development of each child as an individual within a warm, caring and stimulating atmosphere. Our environment enables each child to develop as an independent learner and creative thinker.

Most of the children's learning at the Foundation Stage occurs through carefully planned educational play. Our Foundation Stage unit provides a variety of experiences and equipment to be shared by the children to further their learning. The curriculum has been developed using the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Children have ownership of their learning as they are given regular opportunities to decide on new activities and their interests and aptitudes are catered for.

In this booklet you will find useful information about the unit and its organisation, but if you have any questions once your child starts at Harwood Meadows, our Foundation Stage staff will do their best to answer them.

We look forward to working with you and your child in the coming year.

Mr Julian Bevan  
Head Teacher

Mrs S Mogradia  
Foundation Stage Leader

## 1. HARWOOD MEADOWS SCHOOL FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

### Rationale

Our aim is to offer our children rich and stimulating early years education that builds on what our children already know and can do; we ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged. We aim to offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points; content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- personal, social and emotional well being;
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning;
- social skills;
- attention skills and persistence;
- language and communication;
- reading and writing;
- mathematics;
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development;
- creative development;
- independence;
- problem solving and thinking skills.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the 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;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical and social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop their independence and self management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the clear aims for our work, the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage through regular staff meetings.



## PLAYING AND LEARNING

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They develop physical and mental skills, gain self confidence and independence and learn to interact socially with others. These learning opportunities are carefully prepared and structured by the staff to encourage children to investigate and explore a wide range of activities, materials and equipment. Happy children learn more effectively.

They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. In the Early Years, indoor and outdoor learning are equally important. Teachers will introduce new challenges and will work with individuals or small groups. The process of experimentation and practice is a vital first step in learning. Carefully structured play is not merely a way of passing the time, but a child's most important method of learning. Early on in the Reception Class, children are introduced to group work, and by Christmas are able to work in groups with an adult, and also work independently in groups to complete a variety of tasks in reading, writing and maths.

## ASSESSMENT

Our school Assessment and Record Keeping policy highlights the procedures for assessment that are relevant in the Foundation Stage. In addition to this, we make regular formal and informal assessments of children's learning, and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Most assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, and this involves teacher and other adults as appropriate. The Early Years Foundation Stage objectives for all seven areas of learning are highlighted when they are achieved in both Nursery and Reception classes, so that progress is clearly marked. The Foundation Stage profile assesses all areas of learning and is completed for every child at the end of the Reception year.

Through assessment, each child is given two to three targets per term which are shared with parents at Parent Conferences held twice a year. Parents receive detailed comments on their child's progress in each area of learning and the child's strengths and development needs, and details of the child's general progress are highlighted. A written report in the summer term celebrates the child's achievements during the year, and provides information relating to the child's developmental progress compared to chronological age.

## 2: ABOUT OUR UNIT

Sessions for Nursery children attending part time:

Morning 8:45am – 11:45am  
Afternoon 12:30pm – 3:30pm

Sessions for Nursery children attending full time:  
8:45am – 3:30pm

Sessions for Reception children:  
8:45am – 3:30pm

### What is a Foundation Stage Unit?

Your child will either be starting Nursery or entering into Reception class. All children of these ages follow a curriculum called the Early Years Foundation Stage which caters for children from birth to 5 years. The Early Years Foundation Stage is designed to ensure that the children have acquired all the skills necessary for learning before they start on the National Curriculum in Year 1.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum enables all children to experience and explore a wide range of resources and to provide a balance of learning activities, both child-initiated and teacher-led, throughout the unit. The Foundation Stage staff are deployed around the unit to provide a wide range of focussed activities based on the seven areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors.

A range of child-initiated and teacher-led activities are planned within the areas of learning which provide the children with a wide range of experiences that promote independence and exploration. These activities are based on objectives that lead the children to achieving the Early Learning Goals, which are the national standards we hope most children will achieve by the end of Reception year. The Early Learning Goals lead towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. We provide a wide range of materials and differentiated activities, which are carefully selected, planned and presented to cater for all abilities.

Children can choose where to work during the integrated sessions and will be asked to participate in group activities with an adult, when appropriate. We aim to help the children extend their thinking and understanding as they play (work) together. Experiences will be provided that allow children to develop at their own rate and according to their own ability. The stimulating environment encourages children to take part in child-initiated learning and problem solving activities. These activities are often used to consolidate skills taught by an adult earlier in the week.



### **3.THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is based around seven areas of learning, the first three are the prime areas;

#### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

This is concerned with children's growing awareness of themselves and their relationships with others. It includes the ability to function as members of a group and to form relationships.

It involves valuing oneself and others and developing a sense of responsibility and independence.

It includes developing the ability to be aware of their own feelings and understand that people have different needs and feelings too. Also, developing the ability to show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and regulate their behaviour accordingly.

#### **Physical Development**

Physical Development is concerned with the development of physical abilities. This includes developing gross motor and fine manipulative skills, control, co-ordination and spatial awareness. It involves developing positive attitudes towards a healthy and active life, and knowing about difference factors that support their overall health and wellbeing including healthy eating, tooth brushing, sensible amounts of screen time and having a good sleep routine.

#### **Communication and Language**

Communication and Language is concerned with different ways of communicating. It includes developing the skills of listening e.g. understanding how to listen carefully, and why listening is important. Aspects of speaking include learning new vocabulary, articulating their ideas in well-formed sentences and engaging in story time.

The next four areas are the specific areas. Literacy is one of these and is concerned with developing reading and writing.

## Literacy

### Pre-Reading

We teach letter sounds phonetically; that is 'a' as in apple, not 'ay', and 'c' as in cat and not 'cee' etc. Children also learn to pronounce sounds in a pure way. This is shown in the 5 minute Read Write Inc. phonemes pronunciation guide video on the internet. Children use this knowledge of letter sounds to build words when reading, so this is much more important than knowing letter names. Other pre-reading activities may not be immediately apparent as such, but they are part and parcel of the foundation stage day. Activities are planned to develop all of the following:

- listening and speaking skills;
- hand/eye co-ordination;
- visual discrimination;
- visual memory;
- auditory discrimination;
- auditory memory.

Your child may bring home books from the first stages of our home/ school reading scheme. It would help your child if you could prompt and question your child as to what is happening, what might happen next etc.

Positive attitudes towards reading are created at this stage and it is important that your child receives the right messages about reading from us all. We hope that all our children see reading as a pleasurable activity, and one that they can take a lead from all the adults around them. Please try to make the time and space for sharing books and comics at home. Your child will begin to look forward to the moments you spend together.

### Pre-writing/Mark Making

In early years, children make marks for a wide range of reasons, across all seven areas of learning. Through these marks, they are communicating their ideas, expressing their feelings, developing their imagination and creativity, and testing their hypotheses about the world. These opportunities for making 'thinking visible' are fundamental to every child's learning and development, therefore mark making should be valued.

Many opportunities for mark making are provided throughout the setting, from big chalking on the floor, painting with water and playing with twigs in mud outdoors, to using different colours and types of paper, brushes and rollers, whiteboards and ready made books, indoors.

Children are provided with many activities to develop gross motor and fine motor skills in preparation for writing, for example, drawing in the air with streamers to scooping rice into small bottles.

When children begin to write their own name, they are taught correct letter formation, first tracing, then copying, then writing from memory. Correct pencil grip is also taught at this time. Demonstration of this is available for parents on request, so that this can be followed up at home.

In Nursery, alongside writing, the children are given many experiences to develop their listening skills through daily phonic activities such as singing, rhymes, listening games and identifying initial letter sounds in words and words which rhyme. If a child cannot hear sounds, they cannot begin to write them!

In Reception phonic sessions, their listening skills are developed when children learn letter sounds in order to blend and segment words.

Correct letter formation is taught from the start. We have taken on board the cursive script, from Year 2 which is used throughout our school and in many other schools. It would be really helpful (and much less confusing!) if, when your child is ready to attempt to write his own name, school and home could share the same strategy.

## Mathematics

Mathematics relate to an understanding of number and numerical patterns. This includes the skill of applying mathematical knowledge to solve problems in practical and meaningful situations. It requires a questioning attitude and the confidence to predict, hypothesise and investigate. Topics of shape, length, weight and capacity are also taught.

## Understanding the World

Understanding the World is concerned with finding out about and making sense of the world in which we live. It includes the skills of observing, predicting, exploring and interpreting and using tools and materials appropriately and includes Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World.



## Expressive Arts and Design

This is concerned with the use of the imagination and creative expression. It involves appreciating and finding pleasure in our own creations and those of others and includes music, dance, art and imaginative role play.

These seven areas of learning are all accessed through play. When planning this curriculum we try to follow the children's interests as far as possible. In addition we have mini topics based on themes such as Marvellous Me! Celebrations, Once Upon a time, Helping Hands, Let's grow and Animal Adventures. As you walk around our unit you will find that the space has been divided into different areas that enable the children to explore and experience many learning and play opportunities. Such areas are the sand and water areas, role-play areas, fine motor skills, construction corners, creative areas, malleable areas, outdoor areas and reading areas.

### WHAT DID YOU DO AT SCHOOL TODAY?

Early Years children do not recognise learning in separate subject areas. Your child will make scientific discoveries by planting seeds, baking, and mixing paint; will learn about words and reading through sharing stories, books, songs and rhymes; will begin to understand the rules of mathematics by sorting, building, making models and playing in the sand and water trays; will feel the joy of self-expression through dance, music, painting and clay work; will experience the exhilaration of physical exercise through riding a bike, rolling on the grass or chasing a ball; will learn about sharing, taking turns, winning and losing and playing together happily in a non aggressive way.

### 4. WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL NEED

We welcome your support in sending your child to school dressed appropriately and wearing the official school uniform. School uniform is advisable even for nursery children as your child can then become fully involved in all activities without the worry of spoiling their best clothes. **Please label every item clearly with your child's name – including shoes.** As we do encourage the children to be as independent as possible in dressing, toileting and washing hands we advise that children do not come to school in belts and buttons that they cannot manage unaided, as this can sometimes lead to accidents at the toilet. **Please note that your child must be toilet trained before they enter Nursery.**

For Nursery and Reception, in case of accidents or if your child gets wet during play, please could a bag of named clothes – including underwear and socks and a pair of pumps be provided in a named bag on your child's peg.

Outdoor learning is an important part of the curriculum and is regarded as being equally important to learning in the classroom – activities are offered whatever the weather. We have waterproof suits and wellies in various sizes but your child will need sensible outdoor clothing in order to fully participate in the activities, such as a hat and gloves in particularly cold weather and a sun hat when it is hot and sunny.

## 5. SNACKS AND LUNCHES

School dinners are available for our Reception children and those children taking part in full time nursery provision. The lunches are provided by Dolce Catering and contain a wide and varied menu. Lunches can be ordered and paid for via the SchoolGrid online portal. Please do inform us of any allergies your child may have.

We have snack time as part of our daily routine. The children wash hands and sit in a circle on the carpet. This provides opportunities for the development of social skills and speaking and listening are very apparent. Daily free milk and free fruit are provided for every child. Children may bring in an additional healthy snack, please remember that we are a nut free school and this includes products such as Nutella. Please send this in a labelled container.

## 6. WHAT CAN YOUR CHILD DO NOW?

It is of great benefit both to your child and us if we can find out as much as possible about them before they enter our unit. It helps a great deal in helping your child feel secure and to ease the transition from home to school. Provided with this pack is an 'All about Me' booklet. It would be helpful if you could fill this in with your child and hand it to us before they start Nursery/Reception.

## 7. USEFUL INFORMATION FOR YOU AND FOR US

Please complete the online form sent to you before your child starts school. This provides us with details of the following:

- Data Collection Form;
- Parental Permission Forms
- Medical conditions and allergies

We aim to work as closely as we can with you through regular contact. This happens on a day-to-day basis when you bring your child to school. If you have anything you wish to discuss with us regarding your child please don't hesitate to ask. We welcome parents' contributions to children's learning journeys, as documenting things they have learnt at home gives us a better picture of their overall development.

In the autumn term there will be an opportunity for you to discuss how your child has settled into the Foundation Stage with the staff. Throughout the year there is regular opportunity for you to view your child's progress at our open afternoons and evenings, when you can have a look at what they have been doing in school, and view their books.

The school also informs parents of what your child will be learning in school through termly curriculum letters and keeping you informed of all school events through regular newsletters and the Class Dojo app.

If your child is sick or ill in the evening or during the night we advise you to keep them off school the following day. Please read our medicine statement for further details.

To ensure the safety of the children. It is our legal responsibility to release children only into the care of individuals named by the parent/carer.

Parents of all Foundation Stage children are also asked to inform us of any new adults who may be collecting your child on a particular day, and have provided us with a password to be used by authorised new adults when collecting your child.

### **CHILD PROTECTION**

Because of day-to-day contact with children, schools are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. Parents should be aware therefore that where it appears to a member of staff that a child may have been abused, the school is required, as part of the local Child Protection Procedures, to report their concerns to the Social Services Department immediately.

### **8. HELPFUL CONTACTS**

Bolton Childcare Information Service – 01204 386030

Bolton Toy Library – 01204 849928

Bolton Central Library – 01204 333173

### **9. CONCLUSION**

It is our aim to give your child the best possible start to his/her education. You can be confident that your child will develop in a stimulating and secure environment, which specifically caters for the needs of the children who are entrusted to our care. We look forward to working in partnership with you and your child at Harwood Meadows Foundation Stage Unit.

## WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD

We do encourage the children to become as independent as possible at Harwood Meadows and a part of this they are encouraged to take an active role in serving snacks, tidying up during and at the end of sessions – including washing up, sweeping the floor etc, and making decisions for themselves. The children also benefit from learning to dress and undress themselves, and to put on and take off shoes and coats. You can help support this by reinforcing independence at home.

Our Foundation Stage unit encourages children to play and work together, to share both equipment and adult attention, to take turns and have regard for the needs of others. We hope that your child will settle down and be very happy in our unit, gaining in confidence and becoming increasingly more aware of the world around them. You, as parents, can play your part by talking to your child about what they have been doing and by taking an interest in all the activities in which your child has been involved. Your child may be asked to bring in something of interest, related to a particular topic or set a particular task to do at home. We do strongly encourage you to support these activities as a shared partnership in your child's learning can only be of benefit to your child. It also provides a way for you to find out what your child is doing in school and give you an awareness of their development and progress. It will help your child to settle if you have helped them to achieve the following:

- put on a coat and take it off without help;
- put shoes on and take them off and fasten them;
- be apart from you for a while without getting upset;
- play with other children;
- share toys and activities;
- share a book and listen to a story;
- sing a few songs or nursery rhymes, (don't worry about singing in tune!);
- have experience of getting messy without getting upset eg. with paint or water;
- spend lots of time talking to you.

## Toilet Training

**Your child must be fully independently toilet trained prior to starting Nursery and Reception class. Children are expected to go to the toilet unaided, wipe their bottoms and wash their hands afterwards.**

## How to help your child with early maths

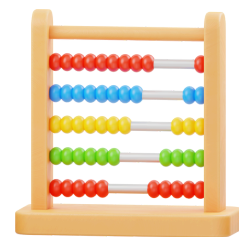
Maths is everywhere. Routines, activities and the environment all offer rich sources of mathematical experiences for young children.

Children can see numbers – on houses, cars and in shops; and many other everyday places.



We can encourage mathematical language in everyday situations like –

- laying the table;
- sorting the washing;
- matching socks;
- getting dressed;
- making the dinner;
- how many plates we need?
- how many letters to post?
- tidying up;
- filling boxes with bricks.



We can play mathematical games with young children: - dominoes, jigsaws, shopping games, number rhymes, number stories, shape matching games, colour matching games, simple games with dice, posting boxes, making patters.

## Early Number Work

Some children can count up to 5 or 10 when they start school. Number rhymes such as '1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Once I caught a fish alive', help reinforce this. However, counting alone means nothing if they do not understand the value of numbers. Children may count to 10 but only touch 3 items.

At home, simple everyday tasks use numbers. For example, you could count the cutlery as you take it from the drawer when setting the table. Try counting socks, shoes or stairs.

## How to help your child with early writing

Young children like to make marks on paper. Early writing is the beginning of communication. We see writing all around us and we can encourage children to write in many ways.

Writing materials to have:

- Thick crayons
- Felt tip pens
- Pencils
- Chalk
- Large pieces of paper
- Scissors
- Glue

Children can help you to:

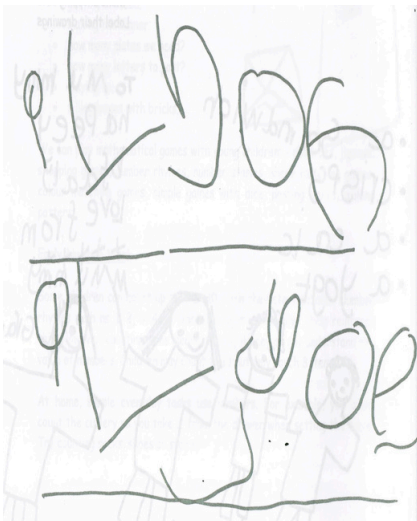
- Write birthday cards
- Make shopping lists
- Label their drawings



### Mark making

Making marks on paper is your child's first writing. Children need to be able to experiment with the different marks they make.

After a lot of practise, patterns can be seen which start the beginning of letter formation.




In school, children's names are written in lower case, not capitals. It is important that children are shown how to hold a pencil and form letters and numbers correctly from the start. Incorrect formation can affect the speed and the neatness of handwriting later, and habits are difficult to change.

### How you can help your child with early reading work?

Children love to read books. You could help your children by reading to your child regularly and tell stories. Give time to talk, question and answer. Discuss the illustrations and the story and do not underestimate your child's ability. Before learning to read, children need to know the basics. Where to begin on a page, following words in a left to right order, starting with the top line and turning the pages in the correct order.

We trust that this information will be of use to you. We have produced this document after many years of experience but if there are sections of this booklet which are not clear, or if you require further information, please do let us know.



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