



Foundational Skills Framework

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Purpose

This framework defines the essential foundational skills that all pupils must secure in order to access our broad, ambitious curriculum. It reflects the clear, coherent sequencing and explicit teaching approaches highlighted in the Strong foundations report, ensuring that foundational knowledge is taught deliberately, practised sufficiently, and remembered. It aligns our chosen programmes with evidence-informed pedagogy, supporting consistency, early identification of need, and strong progression from EYFS to Year 6. The framework ensures that no learning is left to chance and that pupils with lower starting points receive the precise teaching and practice they need to keep up, not catch up.

It supports:

- Clear curriculum intent and sequencing
- Consistent expectations across phases
- Early intervention and targeted support
- High-quality teaching for every pupil
- Strong transition from EYFS into KS1 and KS2

1. EYFS & Starting Points (New Section)

Aim: Pupils with lower starting points receive the precise teaching, practice, and curriculum adjustments needed to secure foundational knowledge quickly and confidently.

School Approach

- Children enter school with varied starting points; teaching is adapted to ensure pupils who need more time, practice, or earlier-stage content receive it without stigma.
- No child is expected to “catch up later”; foundational knowledge is secured before new content is introduced.
- Adults ensure equitable interaction, deliberately engaging pupils who may otherwise withdraw or opt out of learning opportunities.
- Curriculum adjustments are made where cohorts show lower communication, language, or self-regulation on entry.

2. Early Reading, Fluency & Literature

Aim: All pupils become fluent, confident readers who can access the full curriculum and develop a lifelong love of reading.

School Approach

- Read Write Inc (RWI) provides a systematic, consistent approach to teaching early phonics across EYFS and KS1. Daily sessions follow the review–teach–practise–apply structure, ensuring secure grapheme–phoneme correspondences (GPCs), accurate blending, and early fluency.
- Pupils read decodable books precisely matched to their assessed phonics level, enabling success and preventing cognitive overload.
- Regular RWI assessments inform grouping and pace, with daily 1:1 tutoring for pupils who need additional practice using RWI's fast-track intervention materials.
- Staff use consistent RWI routines, signals, and language to support automaticity and reduce cognitive load.
- Daily story time exposes pupils to rich vocabulary, narrative structures, and ambitious texts beyond their independent reading level.
- Written comprehension tasks are not introduced until pupils can read the text independently; early comprehension is developed through oral discussion, shared reading, and story time.
- Staff ensure equitable adult interaction, deliberately engaging quieter or less confident pupils in blending practice, book talk, and discussion.

Transition into KS2

- Pupils who still require phonics support in lower KS2 continue with targeted RWI tutoring to secure decoding and fluency.
- Once decoding is secure, pupils move into Accelerated Reader (AR) to support independent reading, personalised book choice, and regular comprehension checks. AR quizzes provide timely feedback and help staff monitor progress, engagement, and reading stamina.
- Teachers use AR data to guide book selection, identify pupils needing additional support, and celebrate reading achievements.

KS2 Novel Study

- From Year 3 onwards, the school's KS2 Novel Study approach ensures all pupils experience high-quality, challenging texts that broaden vocabulary, deepen comprehension, and build cultural capital.
- Novel Study units include:
 - whole-class shared reading of rich, carefully chosen texts
 - explicit teaching of vocabulary, inference, retrieval, prediction, and summarising
 - structured discussion and oral rehearsal
 - opportunities to explore themes, characters, and authorial choices

- This approach ensures that pupils who may not independently choose demanding texts still access them through high-quality modelling and shared reading.

Reading for Pleasure

- Class libraries are curated to include diverse, high-quality texts that reflect pupils' interests and broaden their horizons.
- Teachers regularly read aloud to pupils, modelling fluency, expression, and a love of literature.
- Reading routines, book talk, author studies, and reading celebrations help embed a strong reading culture across the school.

3. Early Writing, Transcription & Composition

Aim: Pupils secure accurate, fluent transcriptional skills and develop the confidence to compose sentences orally and in writing, without being asked to attempt tasks beyond their current stage of knowledge.

School Approach

- Write Well provides a structured, progressive handwriting curriculum from EYFS upwards. **Handwriting is explicitly modelled**, including correct pencil grip, starting points, and letter families, ensuring pupils do not develop incorrect habits.
- Daily or frequent handwriting practice builds stamina, accuracy, and automaticity, reducing cognitive load during composition.
- Writing expectations are carefully matched to pupils' developmental stage. **Prematurely complex tasks** (e.g., extended stories, text-type writing) are avoided until transcription is secure.
- Oral rehearsal is embedded across lessons to strengthen sentence structure, vocabulary choices, and confidence.
- Ready Steady Spell offers a cumulative, phonically aligned spelling progression. **Dictation is used regularly** to practise applying taught GPCs and spelling patterns without the additional load of composition.
- Pupils with fine-motor or transcriptional barriers receive targeted support, including fine-motor interventions, Write Well boosters, and adapted resources.

4. Early Maths

Aim: Pupils build deep, secure number sense enabling later reasoning and problem-solving.

School Approach

- **White Rose Maths** provides the school's long-term progression, ensuring small steps, coherence, and consistent representations across year groups.
- Lessons follow a clear structure: *review, new learning, guided practice, independent practice, and challenge*, with frequent opportunities for reasoning and problem-solving.
- **NCETM Strengthening Number Programme** (EYFS–Year 3) deepens early number sense through structured sessions focusing on:
 - subitising
 - composition of number
 - cardinality
 - comparison
 - early calculation
- Teachers use NCETM's mastery materials to ensure precise mathematical language, consistent models, and conceptual understanding.
- Daily retrieval practice strengthens fluency in number bonds, counting, and key facts.
- Concrete–pictorial–abstract (CPA) progression is embedded across lessons to support conceptual understanding.
- Ongoing formative assessment identifies misconceptions early, enabling timely intervention and pre-teaching.
- Teachers ensure tasks build directly on prior knowledge and do not assume understanding that has not been taught.
- Pupils are not asked to record mathematical thinking in books until they can form numbers correctly and fluently.
- Lessons minimise distractions and use consistent routines so pupils can focus their working memory on the mathematical concept being taught.
- Teachers use precise mathematical language and consistent representations to support conceptual understanding.

5. Language, Vocabulary & Communication

Aim: Pupils develop the language needed to think, reason, and access the curriculum.

School Approach

- Vocabulary is taught explicitly in all subjects, with teachers identifying Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary and revisiting it through retrieval and application.
- Sentence stems, talk frames, and structured discussion routines support pupils to articulate ideas clearly and confidently.
- High-quality texts across the curriculum model ambitious language, varied sentence structures, and rich vocabulary.

- EYFS uses language-rich continuous provision, story-based learning, and daily talk routines to build early communication skills.
- Pupils with speech, language, or communication needs are identified early and supported through targeted interventions and external agency guidance where appropriate.
- Teachers model precise, subject-specific vocabulary and encourage pupils to use it in full sentences.
- Teachers monitor participation carefully to ensure all pupils, including quieter or less confident children, take part in structured talk.
- Adults intentionally target pupils who may otherwise withdraw, ensuring equitable access to high-quality language interactions.

6. Self-Regulation, Learning Behaviours & Independence

Aim: Pupils develop the behaviours that enable them to learn effectively, manage their emotions, and participate confidently in school life.

School Approach

- Zones of Regulation is taught explicitly and revisited regularly, giving pupils a shared language for recognising emotions, understanding triggers, and choosing appropriate regulation strategies.
- Staff use Trauma-Informed Schools (TiS) principles to create emotionally safe, predictable environments where pupils feel secure, valued, and ready to learn.
- Co-regulation is modelled consistently by adults, with pupils gradually supported to develop independence in managing emotions, behaviour, and social interactions.

The Pastoral Team, including the Learning Mentor and Family Champion Team, provides targeted support for pupils and families. This includes:

- 1:1 emotional-literacy sessions
 - small-group nurture and social-skills work
 - early-help support for families
 - attendance, wellbeing, and home-school liaison
 - practical strategies to strengthen resilience, confidence, and engagement
- Routines and expectations are consistent across the school, reducing cognitive load and supporting smooth transitions between activities and spaces.
- Pupils with additional SEMH needs receive close support from MSHT, including personalised plans, targeted interventions, and regular review with staff and families.
- Restorative approaches help pupils repair relationships, reflect on choices, and build empathy and resilience.

- Independence is nurtured through scaffolded tasks, clear expectations, and structured opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning, organisation, and behaviour.
- Staff work collaboratively with the Pastoral Team to ensure early identification of need, coordinated support, and strong communication with families.
- Adults model attention, turn-taking, and discussion behaviours, ensuring pupils understand how to participate successfully in whole-class and small-group learning.

7. Physical Development & Fine/Gross Motor Skills

Aim: Pupils develop the physical readiness needed for writing, PE, and wider curriculum access.

School Approach

- **Striver PE** provides a progressive, skills-based curriculum that develops agility, balance, coordination, fitness, and sport-specific skills.
- EYFS offers daily fine-motor and gross-motor opportunities through continuous provision, outdoor learning, and targeted activities.
- Fine-motor interventions (e.g., threading, dough disco, scissor skills) support pupils who need additional development.
- Teachers model safe movement, equipment handling, and spatial awareness across all physical activities.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop confidence, teamwork, and perseverance through structured PE lessons and active playtimes.

8. Knowledge of the World & Cultural Capital

Aim: Pupils build the early knowledge, experiences, and perspectives that broaden horizons and support later subject learning.

School Approach

- **Kapow** provides structured, progressive exposure to artists, musicians, designers, cultural traditions, and creative techniques, ensuring pupils experience a broad range of cultural influences.
- Art, Music, and Design Technology lessons include hands-on participation, enabling pupils to experience culture, not just learn about it.
- Carefully planned enrichment experiences (visits, visitors, performances, outdoor learning) broaden pupils' horizons and deepen subject knowledge.
- High-quality texts introduce pupils to diverse characters, settings, histories, and perspectives.

- Strong links with the local community, environment, and cultural heritage help pupils understand their place in the world.
- Curriculum planning ensures pupils encounter a wide range of global perspectives, traditions, and creative expressions.

9. Assessment, Monitoring & Intervention

Aim: Gaps are identified early and addressed swiftly.

School Approach

- RWI assessments track phonics progress every 6–8 weeks, informing grouping and targeted tutoring.
- NCETM number assessments and White Rose end-of-unit checks identify gaps in mathematical understanding.
- EYFS uses observational assessment, language screening, and developmental checkpoints to identify early needs.
- Short, focused interventions are delivered with clear entry/exit criteria and regular review.
- Teachers use daily formative assessment to adapt teaching, address misconceptions, and provide immediate feedback.
- Vulnerable pupils are closely monitored through pupil progress meetings, SEND reviews, and collaboration with MSHT.
- Assessment informs not only grouping and intervention but also curriculum pacing and content.
- Where assessment identifies gaps in foundational knowledge, teachers adjust teaching sequences, provide additional practice, and revisit essential knowledge before moving on.
- Leaders adapt the curriculum where cohorts have lower starting points, ensuring all pupils secure the foundational knowledge needed for later success.
- Interventions are short, focused, and aligned with the core curriculum so pupils do not miss essential teaching.

10. Partnerships with Parents & Carers

Aim: Families understand and support foundational skill development.

School Approach

- Parent workshops introduce families to RWI phonics, early reading, White Rose maths, and early writing approaches.
- Regular communication (newsletters, videos, demonstrations) helps families understand how to support learning at home.
- Home-school reading routines are well-established, with guidance on reading strategies and book-sharing.

- Staff build supportive, non-judgemental relationships with families, offering practical help where needed.
- Families of pupils with additional needs receive personalised guidance, regular updates, and opportunities to collaborate on next steps.

11. Progression Overview (EYFS → KS1 → KS2)

Area	EYFS Foundations	KS1 Expectations	KS2 Secure Foundations
Reading	Secure GPCs, blending, early fluency	Fluent decoding, developing prosody	Fluent, expressive reading with strong comprehension
Writing	Letter formation, oral sentences	Accurate spelling, simple composition	Fluent transcription, increasingly complex composition
Maths	Number sense, subitising	Secure number facts, early reasoning	Fluent recall, confident reasoning and problem-solving
Language	Vocabulary growth, structured talk	Full sentences, subject vocabulary	Confident, precise language across subjects
Learning Behaviours	Routines, attention	Independence, resilience	Self-regulation, metacognition

* GPC's = grapheme-phoneme correspondences