



FLATTS
NURSERY SCHOOL

Independence

Curiosity

Community

Learning, Teaching and
Assessment Policy
2026

At Flatts Nursery School we want all our children to leave us with skills and abilities they will not only take to their next phase of education but throughout their lives. We believe our three values will enhance their learning now and in the future.

CURIOSITY – We believe curiosity leads to learning, if a child shows an interest in something then this is an open door to learning and discovery

“I think, at a child’s birth, if a mother could ask a fairy godmother to endow it with the most useful gift, that gift would be curiosity.” – **Eleanor Roosevelt**

Independence is not a static condition; it is a continuous conquest, and in order to reach not only freedom, but also strength, and the perfecting of one's powers, it is necessary to follow this path of unremitting toil.
Maria Montessori

INDEPENDENCE – A child who is independent can lead their own learning, showing resilience and tenacity which will help throughout life

COMMUNITY – An understanding of how to belong to a community is vital for life. A sense of compassion, tolerance and support are skills we all benefit from

“Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much” – **Helen Keller**

Quality Teaching and Learning

During each session, teaching includes working with individual children or small groups, as well as enhancing the environment to support child-initiated play. Teaching can be defined “as the many different ways in which adults help young children learn, including interactions during planned and child-initiated play, modelling and demonstrating, explaining, exploring ideas, questioning, providing a narrative, facilitating learning, and setting challenges, while using the environment and assessment to plan next steps (OFSTED 2024). Practitioners use all forms of teaching to engage children effectively.

Group time focuses may include:

- Reading stories (including Reading Spine Books)
- Rhymes, songs, and poetry (Poetry Spine)
- Pre-phonics activities (tuning into sounds)
- Listening, turn-taking, and discussions about the day
- Exploring number, shape, space, and measure
- Celebrating self and identity

Quality Interactions

Supporting children to become confident communicators is a key focus at Flatts Nursery School. We use the ShREC approach to guide quality interactions:

- Share attention
- Respond
- Expand
- Conversation

These strategies promote active participation in meaningful, linguistically rich conversations. Additional approaches include Makaton, intensive interaction, and repeating back and extending children's language.

Environment

Our environments are designed to promote independence, exploration, and inclusion. Children can play cooperatively, alone, or observe peers, both indoors and outdoors. Low-level furniture, natural colours, and materials create a warm, purposeful space.

Resources are labelled and organised to allow children to access and tidy independently— "choose it, use it, put it away." Spaces include:

- Large indoor and outdoor areas
- Sensory room
- Woodland area

Children are encouraged to explore thoughts, feelings, and relationships, supporting understanding of the world through senses and imagination.

Regulation

We maintain clear boundaries and routines guided by our school rules: **"Always be ready, kind, and safe."**

Challenging social situations are seen as opportunities to co-regulate and support children in developing emotional resilience and social skills. Children are explicitly taught to assert themselves, e.g., saying **"Stop it, I don't like that"** with a flat palm to understand consent.

Enrichment

All children participate in enrichment activities that extend learning beyond the classroom:

- Growing and eating vegetables in our allotment
- Rearing butterflies and hatching chicks
- Supporting neighbours at Ashworth Grange Care Home
- Celebrating festivals such as Eid and Christmas
- Meeting community helpers (e.g., police and fire service)

Staff teams

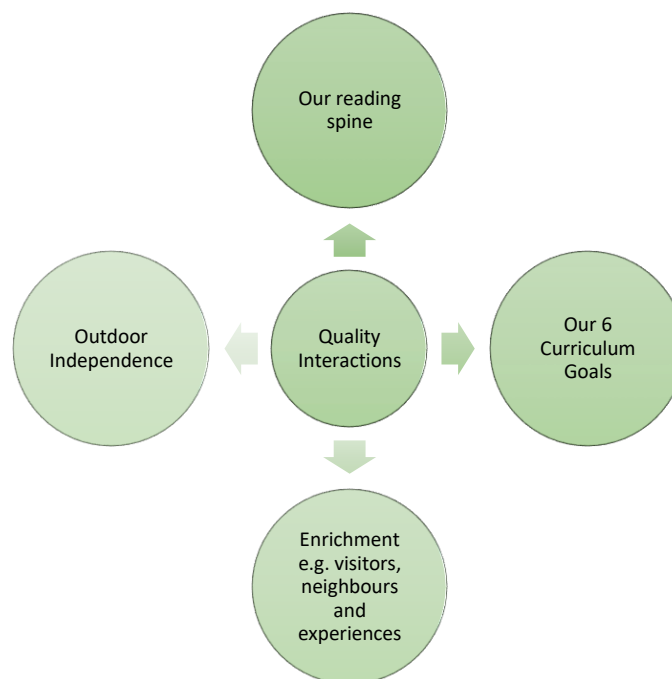
The core responsibility for teaching and learning rests with the class teacher or senior early years practitioner, led by the assistant headteacher. Although many tasks may be delegated to the key person, the class teacher and the senior early years practitioner must support staff to achieve best practice, coach, encourage and model, and monitor the quality of work by each team member. Staff roles and the routines of the sessions will be used to effectively support the aims and objectives of this policy. Sometimes staff work with individual children or groups of children, in guided learning activities or observing children at play both inside and outside. All key people are involved in planning and assessing children's work. Key people maintain the records of a group of children assigned to them. Students, volunteers and adult helpers are deployed as effectively as possible with clear guidelines as to what is expected of them.

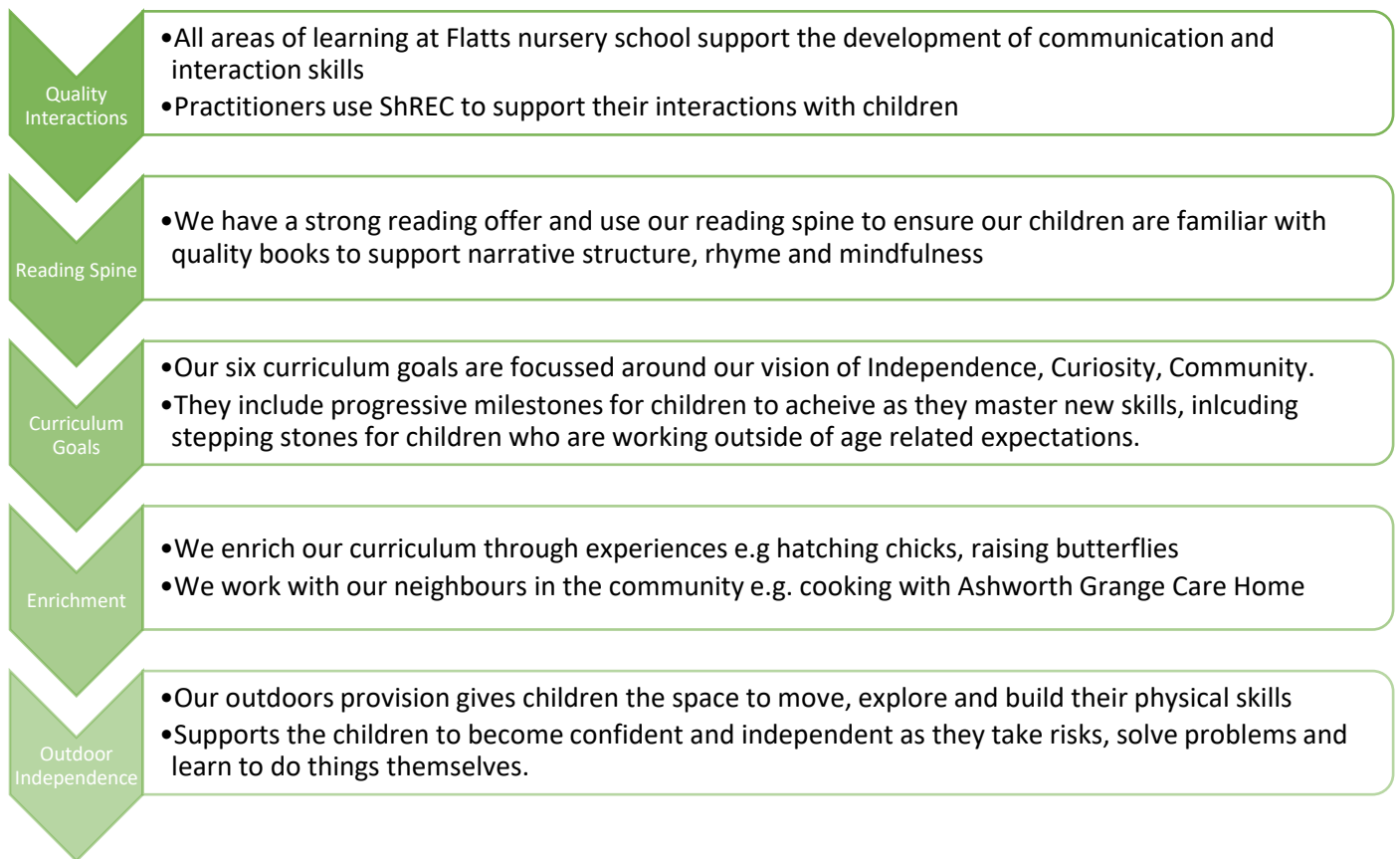
Curriculum responsibilities

As a small school, we allocate the prime areas plus math and literacy to teachers and share the responsibility of the expressive arts and design and knowledge and understanding of the world. We work towards every child accessing excellent provision in all the areas of learning in the EYFS. As a team we review and reflect on the curriculum goals throughout the year. While some staff lead on particular areas, they are not leading on these in isolation, a collaborative and critical friend approach is used.

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum integrates five interconnected elements, providing a **broad, balanced, and progressive programme** that supports children's progress.





Curriculum Goals

Our six curriculum goals align with our three vision words: **Community, Independence, Curiosity**. Each goal has **progression milestones** and stepping stones to ensure all children, including those with additional needs, can access learning:

1. I can **Regulate** my emotions and become a confident learner
2. I can **Follow instructions** to make food
3. I can **Invent** a story to share with others
4. I can **Play** a game with others until someone wins
5. I can **Draw** an observation picture of myself or an object
6. I can **Create** in different ways

Goals are usually focused on for 1–2 weeks, revisited throughout the year to consolidate learning.

Assessment for Learning

We are not driven by assessment. Our approach begins with careful observation in structured activities and play, alongside conversations with parents, to build a full picture of the child.

We prioritise interactions over recording—practitioners aim to be “in the moment,” not distracted by photographs or notes.

OPAL (Observing Play and Learning)

We use OPAL to track development against age-related expectations and share observations with families. At each assessment point next steps are identified and agreed with parents and strategies are shared on how to help at home. Once a child is settled and the key person has become familiar with the child and family a Starting Point will be written (this is their first Spotlight Assessment). Spotlights are updated every six months, with a two-month review. Families are encouraged to contribute to Spotlights.

Progress Check at age 2

Between the ages of 2 and 3 years old, every child will be screened using their 30-month OPAL milestone and the ASQ30 month questionnaire. Information will be gathered from parents and staff using the assessment tools and a summary will be provided for parents. The summary will include:

- Areas in which a child is progressing well
- Areas where additional support may be needed
- Next steps, and the strategies practitioners will use to support this.

The summary will be shared with parents at an agreed time, to enable partnership working and to offer any support to parents of what they can do at home. If a child has any significant developmental delays or differences which practitioners feel need external support, this will be completed with agreement and consent from parents.

Communication and Language Screening and Support

We are aware that communication and language development is key to support all other areas of learning. To support the development of communication and language we use a variety of tools and processes to ensure we have a clear picture of a child's current ability and where they may need more support. Children will be screened once they are settled in nursery using WellComm Speech and Language Toolkit or first nouns or first verbs, depending on need. These assessments are then used to allocate support.

Curriculum Assessment

Each curriculum goal has a stepping stone and four milestones covering Birth to 5 range 1 to 6. Children move through the curriculum as their skills and knowledge progresses. During the focus week of a curriculum goal, practitioners will log where each child is and identify a next step, this informs future planning. The data is tracked over the year to ensure children are making progress and provision is matching need.

Special Educational Needs

Early identification of additional needs is vital. Children may be identified through observation, parental discussion, or health services. Staff modify learning appropriately, working in partnership with parents and agencies to provide inclusive provision. We use DfE early years assessment tools, to track children working outside age-related expectations. We also collaborate with Kirklees Early Years SEN Service and therapy services to set and review targets. Additional spaces, including our extended classroom (The Nest) and The Sensory Room, support children as needed.

Our goal is for all children to make good progress while learning alongside peers, with targeted support where required. We are passionate about inclusion and ensure our children have the targeted input they need, alongside learning from and with their peers.

At Flatts Nursery School, every child is valued, supported, and empowered to learn, explore, and grow in an inclusive, child-centred environment.