



EARLY YEARS PEN PORTRAIT



“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.”

HEADLINES

It is our intention that all children, regardless of starting point and background, will be given the best opportunity to achieve all ELGs by the end of FS2.

The % of children meeting the expected standard at the end of EYFS in June 2024 was 59%. This was 8.7% below the 2024 National Average. The % of children meeting the expected standard at the end of EYFS in June 2025 was 67.6%. This was 0.7% below the 2025 National Average. However, it was 3% above the Derby average and 0.3% above the East Midlands average.

The school location deprivation indicator is in quintile 5 (most deprived) of all schools.

The pupil base is in quintile 5 (most deprived) of all schools in terms of deprivation.

Our setting adheres to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We assess children based on their age in months through OPAL and use a range of additional documents to further support children's individual needs such as Development Matters, Birth to Five Matters, Universally Speaking and Every Child a Mover.

We currently have an increasing number of EY children receiving specialist support. Staff know when and how to refer children who need intervention beyond our universal and targeted offers.

Over the past few years, we have invested heavily in staff training and are now an approved Communication Friendly Setting.

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Communication and Language is at the heart of our curriculum because:

- The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development.
- Communication and language approaches typically have a very high impact and increase young children's learning by seven months. (EEF)
- Studies that have taken place in settings with a higher proportion of children experiencing socio-economic disadvantage tended to have above average effects suggesting that this is likely to be a beneficial approach for this group. (EEF)
- There is evidence of language gaps for disadvantaged pupils at the beginning of school, so targeted communication support may be a promising approach to narrow these inequalities. (EEF)

HOW DO WE TEACH?

In Early Years we use a range of different teaching approaches.

- **In the Moment:** Our staff get to know our children well so that we can take their own interests and guide them to extend their learning. This is achieved by providing high quality interactions and by making links through purposeful activities. Giving children the freedom to explore their own interests increases their engagement, which is linked to enhanced brain development.
- **Objective Led Planning:** We know children in the Early Years cannot plan their own curriculum. Therefore, we plan for key events, texts, vocabulary, and skills to ensure our children learn about things that are outside their daily experience. We also plan for children's individual gaps identified through ongoing observation and assessment.
- **Enabling Environment:** We carefully consider both the physical environment (indoor and outdoor) and the emotional environment. We recognise the importance of parent/practitioner relationships and how safe and at home children feel within the setting. We believe that children learn best in caring and supportive environments that respond to their individual needs and allows them to play and explore.

WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

Our Early Years setting is ever evolving. It requires continuous training and development.

- To increase the number of strategies to help children know and remember more, enabling us to further close the gaps in their understanding. (Linked to OFSTED school improvements)
- To work with families to try to increase children's attendance at school so pupils do not miss the good education our school provides. (Linked to OFSTED school improvements)
- To develop staff knowledge in fine motor skills development and speaking skills to ensure opportunities are provided to help children meet their ELG as these were our weakest areas last year (-9.8 ppt compared to national and -9.7 ppt compared to regional, respectively) (DFE good development tool)
- To ensure reading and writing data is effectively analysed to identify children who will need extra support in order to increase the % of children achieve the ELGs in these areas (Linked to current year's end of year predictions) and then plan and deliver lessons and interventions which are tailored to do this.