



Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery

"Let your light shine"

Make your light shine, so others will see the good you do and will praise your Father in heaven.

Matt 5 v 16

Early Years Policy

Core Christian Values: Love, Trust, Hope, Respect

Quote from Ofsted June 2025:

'The school has high expectations of pupils' achievements and conduct. Pupils live up to these expectations and achieve well.

This starts in the early years, where children get off to a flying start'.

Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery believe every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their full potential.

Waterhouses greatly values the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery will seek to provide:

Quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind with challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.

A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.

Partnership working between practitioners and parents. Each child should be assigned a key person to ensure that each child's learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person will work to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development.

Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Aims:

The children joining Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery come from a variety of backgrounds and have already learnt a great deal. The education we offer our children in the Foundation Stage aims to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Provide a safe and stimulating environment, inside and outside where children can explore and foster a love of learning
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally ensuring that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Provide high expectations to encourage children to develop resilience and problem-solving skills and to become creative and critical thinkers
- Create an enabling environment where we make the most of every opportunity to support and develop children's vocabulary and communication skills.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Inspire a love of reading and ensure that children develop skills to decode and read simple words and phrases so that they will become more confident and fluent readers in Key Stage 1.

Ofsted quote:

'Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. A love of reading starts successfully in Nursery where children enjoy carefully chosen rhymes, stories and songs. Staff teach phonics and early reading effectively. They make regular checks on pupils' progress through the reading curriculum. Any pupils who fall behind receive the additional support they need. Pupils learn to read well and become confident, fluent readers'.

- Ensure that our children are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into year 1 and beyond.

Learning and Development:

Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework September 2025. In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

In organising and implementing the curriculum our school ensure that there is a broad range of activities and experiences, which include the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and Exploring:** Children investigate and experience things, and “have a go”. *Effective teachers provide an environment that supports children’s curiosity and exploration, allowing them to learn through discovery and experimentation.*

- **Active Learning:** Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements. *Effective teachers reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice to support each child’s unique learning journey.*

- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. *Effective teachers encourage children to think creatively, make connections, and develop problem-solving skills.*

These characteristics are essential in the Early Years, as they enable children to develop a strong foundation for future learning and help them become confident, curious, and independent learners. By incorporating these characteristics into daily learning, teachers create an environment that fosters a love of learning and supports children’s unique learning styles and abilities.

Curriculum Intent

At Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery we will nurture and enrich each individual child, enabling them to access a play-based curriculum. Through rich experiential learning children will gain knowledge and vocabulary which will help them to develop a deeper understanding of the world they live in.

The EYFS provides a secure foundation for future learning and development and through our school vision:

‘Make your light shine, so others will see the good you do and will praise your Father in heaven’. Matthew 5:16 and the core Christian Values: *Love, Trust, Hope and Respect* support our children to develop a love of learning, show kindness and shine in everything they do.

SIAMS inspection report May 2025:

‘There is a real culture of love, hope, trust and respect where individuals are valued and nurtured. Consequently, the lives of pupils and adults at Waterhouses are enriched’.

We work closely and collaboratively with parents, building positive relationships understanding the importance that home experiences have on children’s development now and in the future.

Implementation

At Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery we follow the Early Years Foundation Statutory Framework. The framework specifies the requirements for learning and development. This covers the 7 areas of learning, which are:

The Prime areas:

Communication and Language,

Physical development,

Personal and social development.

The Specific areas:

Literacy,

Maths,

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design.

In Early Years we recognise that children learn best when they feel happy, safe and secure. We provide high quality teaching across all areas of the curriculum both inside and outdoors. During the school day children take part in whole class learning with a qualified teacher or a TA (who is trained in early education). Adults lead these sessions which provide learning that is age appropriate. Children also take part in small group learning which is led by a teacher / TA. These adults led sessions support all children to consolidate or extend learning.

We encourage children to learn through play and exploration (continuous provision activities) where children access learning of their choice which allows them to learn within a carefully planned balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities. The staff work hard to develop positive relationships with the children and take time to learn about the children's interests and likes to support their learning.

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and our aim is to develop a love of reading right from the start. Children are exposed to a range of quality books that not only develop a love of reading, but have been chosen specifically to develop their oracy, vocabulary and comprehension which together enable individuals to communicate effectively, engage with others, and express themselves confidently and accurately. Books are used for termly learning across the EYFS, in adult led activities and during daily story sessions. Children regularly take-home books to share with parents.

We teach high quality phonics using 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' which begins in Nursery with pre-phonics activities, language development and nursery rhymes followed by a systematic approach to teaching reading which is in place to support all children in learning to read.

Early intervention is a prominent feature of our teaching and learning practice and appropriate interventions are put into place to enable children to make progress towards the national expectations at the end of the reception year.

We have close links with local nurseries which support a smooth and settled transition into school and strong parental partnerships which empower parents to support their child's learning at home.

Impact:

We want our children to be happy, kind and confident and through daily learning opportunities widen their knowledge and understanding of the world around them, setting ambitious expectations for all children. Our curriculum celebrates diversity and supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the school's vision: *'Let your light shine!'*

And the Core Christian Values: *Love, Trust, Hope, Respect*

Children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. Teaching and learning in the Early Years has a positive impact on the pupils supporting them to become happy and resilient learners who are ready for the next stage of their education. Children are given a broad range of vocabulary, knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

Pedagogy:

- Caring;
- Starting with the unique child;
- Play based;
- Experiential;
- Knowledge based (understand how children learn and develop);
- Vocabulary and language rich.

Assessment:

Ongoing assessment at Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Practitioners observe children to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are then used to inform future planning. Observations and assessments are recorded on children's online learning journeys which parents can access.

The EYFS undertakes a summative assessment of the level of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding, abilities and attainment against the early learning goals (ELG) and their readiness for year 1

Children's development levels are assessed as the year progresses. If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

Contributions to the assessments:

Accurate assessment will depend on contributions from a range of perspectives, including those of the child. Practitioners will involve children fully in their own assessment by encouraging them to communicate about and review their own learning. Assessment will build on the insights of all adults who have significant interactions with the child. Adults with different roles within school will be able to make varying contributions. Accurate assessment requires a two-way flow of information between school and home. A review of a child's achievements will include those demonstrated at home and parents/carers are encouraged to add to their child's experiences through the online portal: Tapestry (parents are provided with a log in to this system by the school).

Inclusion:

At Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery we have a positive approach to the inclusion of children as stated in all of our policies. All children are valued and given the opportunity to achieve their full potential regardless of gender, ability, disability, special educational need, ethnicity and cultural or social background. We aim to overcome any barriers that might exist and provide for particular needs and disabilities regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

Safeguarding and welfare:

Head Teacher: Rachel Linton

EYFS Lead: Joy Hulme

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Joy Hulme

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs): Rachel Linton and Matthew Evans

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence.

From September 2026 the EYFS safeguarding requirements have been strengthened. As a setting we follow the new safeguarding arrangements and the key ones can be viewed below:

- Volunteer and staff checks — Enhanced criminal records (DBS) checks with barred-list information are required for volunteers, including those who are supervised (the previous exemption for occasional supervised help has been significantly narrowed). New employees must not start work until their checks are received.
- Reporting allegations — Providers must notify Ofsted (or the relevant childminder agency) of allegations of harm or abuse (the previous wording referred to "serious harm"). This lowers the threshold for notification.
- Suitability and disclosures — Requirements for what staff (and prospective staff) must disclose have been amended, including information that may affect their suitability to work with children.
- Children's screen use — Providers must have regard to the DfE's screen-use guidance for early years settings. This builds on parental guidance and includes recommendations such as normally avoiding screen time for under-twos and limiting it for 2- to 5-year-olds.
- Ratios clarification — Ratio requirements apply to the total number of staff available to work directly with children across the whole provision, not just individual rooms. Limited flexibility remains where quality, safety and security are maintained.

Safer eating is already a clear requirement in the EYFS statutory framework and was strengthened in the September 2025 updates.

What the current (and continuing) safer eating requirements cover

The framework includes a dedicated section on safer eating. Key expectations include:

- Supervision — Children must always be closely supervised when eating or drinking. They should sit down to eat (not walk, run or play while eating).
- Choking prevention — Foods that present a choking risk must be prepared and cut appropriately (e.g. grapes, cherry tomatoes, sausages cut lengthways/quarters; hard foods sliced rather than in chunks). Avoid hard, small, sticky or round foods that are difficult to chew for younger children.
- Allergies and dietary needs — Before a child starts, providers must obtain information about special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances. This must be shared with all relevant staff. At every mealtime/snack time, it must be clear who is responsible for checking the food meets each child's requirements. Ongoing discussions with parents/carers (and health professionals where needed) are required to keep allergy action plans up to date. Staff must

know the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, and understand that allergies can develop at any time and this follows the introduction of Benedict's Law which is a set of new legal requirements that make allergy safety mandatory in schools in England.

- Nutrition — Where meals, snacks and drinks are provided, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Providers must have regard to the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance (unless there is good reason not to).
- Paediatric First Aid (PFA)-trained staff must be present in the room during all meal/snack times – Ladybirds class and at lunchtimes in the dinner hall
- Choking incidents must now be recorded and reviewed to identify common features or preventable patterns.
- Allergy care plans should be co-created with health and teacher professionals and with the support from parents updated regularly
- Ensure that children's privacy during nappy changing and toileting is considered and balanced with safeguarding considerations.
- Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery has a safeguarding training record. Safeguarding policies include details of how safeguarding training is delivered and how practitioners are supported to put it into place.

All members of staff receive regular safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures.

Bite sized training is delivered both in staff meetings and through weekly bulletins by the DSL and DDSLs.

All staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Staffing:

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy is in place which includes the safeguarding changes in the Statutory Framework September 2026, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable and trained to a recognised level.

Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

Administration of Medicines Policy in Early Years:

At Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery we promote the good health of all children.

We have a procedure outlined below that staff will only administer medicine prescribed by a child's GP or other medical professional as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework effective 1 September 2025.

'Prescription medicines must not be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse, or pharmacist (medicines containing aspirin should only be given if prescribed by a doctor)'.

Procedures in Early Years (Ladybirds class)

- Parents must complete consent forms to permit staff to administer medication. The exact dosage to be given for medicine prescribed by the child's GP must be clearly marked on the container with the date and child's name.

These are the only instructions that staff will follow.

- If a child has been given any type of medication at home prior to attending the EYFS e.g. Calpol staff must be notified.

- Parents must inform staff if bringing medication onto the so that it may be stored safely out of reach of the children in the lockable fridge available in the school office.

Medication must not be left in the child's bag.

If a child becomes unwell during the day:

- The parent/carer will be telephoned immediately.

- The child is kept away from the other children under the constant care of an adult wherever possible (within the room).

- The child will be made comfortable while awaiting collection by the parents/carers.

- In cases of sickness and diarrhoea we follow infection control measures as advised by Public Health England, which include disinfecting surfaces and door handles and washing absorbent materials.

- Children and staff are not permitted to return to the EYFS for 48 hours after the last incidence of sickness or diarrhoea.

Children with Asthma:

As a school, we recognise that asthma is a widespread, serious, but controllable condition. This school welcomes all pupils with asthma and aims to support these children in participating fully in school life.

We endeavour to do this by ensuring we have:

- an asthma register
- up-to-date asthma policy
- all pupils have an up-to-date asthma action plan
- an emergency salbutamol inhaler is available in Ladybirds class

Inhalers are kept in the classroom in the inhaler box and are taken outdoors, school visits, to the swimming pool and during PE lessons.

Paediatric First Aid:

Quote from the EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026):

3.37: At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings.

At Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery all our support staff and lunchtime supervisors have a current PFA certificate.

Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will hold a PFA certificate. All newly qualified staff with a Level 2 or 3 qualification will be PFA trained. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years.

Acceptable Use of Cameras, Mobile Phones & Smart watches in EYFS:

It is our intention to provide an environment in which children, parents and staff are safe from images being recorded and inappropriately used in turn eliminating the following concerns:

- 1) Staff being distracted from their work with children
- 2) The inappropriate use of mobile phone cameras around children

Mobile Phones

Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery allows EYFS staff to bring in personal mobile telephones and devices for their own use in their breaks only. The senior member of staff in the setting on a daily basis may have their mobile phone on the shelf above the computers for emergency use only.

Users bringing personal devices into setting must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device.

If staff have a personal emergency, they are free to use the setting's phone or make a personal call from their mobile away from the setting.

All students will be requested to place their mobile phones in the office and only to take or receive calls in their lunch break.

During visits the DSL will nominate members of staff who will have access to their mobile phone for outings, which is ONLY to be used for emergency purposes.

Should inappropriate material be found then our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted immediately. We will follow the guidance of the LADO as to the appropriate measures for the staff member.

Cameras

Photographs taken for the purpose of recording a child or group of children participating in activities or celebrating their achievements is an effective form of recording their progression in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

However, it is essential that photographs are taken and stored appropriately to safeguard the children in our care.

Only the designated iPADS are to be used to take any photo within the setting or on outings.

Smart Watches

Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery recognise there are many health benefits for the use of smart watches such as counting steps and heart rate. To ensure the safe wearing of Smart Watches staff must:

The watch has to be worn in 'flight mode' or Bluetooth is disconnected, this will ensure there is no internet connectivity to access notifications or Wi-Fi.

Staff understand they may not use their watch to receive calls or check messages whilst in the setting as this creates distraction and potential dangers.

Information sharing:

Information is stored in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010

- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- DfE (2026) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2023) 'The Prevent duty'
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2026) 'Statutory framework for the EYFS'
- DfE (2025) 'Early years foundation stage profile handbook'
- DfE (2021) 'Development Matters'
- Early Education (2021) 'Birth to 5 Matters'
- UK Council for Internet Safety 'Education for a Connected World'

The School's Early Year's policy will be reviewed once every two years, or more regularly if legislative or policy changes necessitate an earlier review.

Date Reviewed: September 2026