

# MANSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

*Manston* 

## FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS POLICY

Manston Primary is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all children and expects our staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Policy reviewed by: The Senior Leadership Team

Date ratified by Governors: June 2026

Review Date: June 2028



Leeds Safeguarding  
Children Partnership

# 1. POLICY STATEMENT

## Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how Manston Primary School teaches, develops and secures foundational skills for all pupils from Reception to Year 6. It outlines our curriculum design, teaching approaches, assessment systems and intervention models, in line with current DfE expectations and Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework.

This policy applies to all teaching and support staff, the Senior Leadership Team, the Governing Body, parents/carers and external partners.

## Our Commitment to Foundational Skills

At Manston Primary, we recognise that strong foundational skills are the essential building blocks pupils need to access the full curriculum and succeed in later education and life.

In line with Ofsted guidance, we prioritise:

- Communication and language
- Reading – accurate and fluent word reading
- Writing – spelling and handwriting
- Mathematics – number facts, counting and calculating

Our guiding principle is:

**We prioritise 'keeping up' rather than 'catching up'.**

Gaps in foundational knowledge are identified quickly and addressed immediately through high-quality teaching and timely intervention.

## Link to School Vision and Values

Our commitment to foundational skills reflects our wider school values of high expectations, inclusion, safeguarding, equity and strong partnerships with families.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

### What Are Foundational Skills?

Foundational skills are the core knowledge and automaticity pupils must secure in order to access increasingly complex learning.

They are:

1. Communication and Language – being able to talk, listen and understand.
2. Reading – accurate and fluent word reading.
3. Writing – secure spelling and legible, fluent handwriting.
4. Mathematics – rapid recall of number facts, secure counting and accurate calculation.

### Why They Matter at Manston Primary

We recognise that pupils enter school with varied levels of readiness. Early identification and structured support are essential to prevent gaps widening over time.

Strong foundational skills ensure:

- Pupils can access age-related curriculum content.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not left behind.
- Pupils with SEND are supported effectively through early adaptation.
- Teaching time is not lost through repeated reteaching of basic skills.

## 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Leadership Team

Leaders:

- Prioritise foundational skills within curriculum design and the School Development Plan.
- Monitor teaching quality through lesson visits, book scrutiny, pupil voice and assessment review.

- Analyse assessment data to identify trends and vulnerable groups.
- Ensure fidelity to our systematic synthetic phonics programme (Floppy's Phonics).
- Allocate Pupil Premium funding strategically, including staffing to remove barriers to foundational skill acquisition.
- Ensure safeguarding, attendance and behaviour systems align with curriculum priorities so pupils are ready to learn.

## **Class Teachers**

Teachers:

- Deliver high-quality, well-sequenced teaching.
- Identify gaps through formative assessment.
- Implement same-day 'keep-up' interventions.
- Adapt teaching for pupils with SEND.
- Communicate clearly with parents regarding progress and support.

## **Teaching Assistants and Support Staff**

Support staff:

- Deliver structured interventions (e.g. Lexia, Alphabet Ark).
- Support same-day phonics keep-up sessions.
- Reinforce number fact fluency.
- Provide pre-teaching where needed.

## **SENDCo**

The SENDCo:

- Oversees the graduated approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review).
- Ensures IMP targets link directly to pupils' primary needs in foundational skill areas.
- Coordinates specialist assessments and external agency involvement.
- Works in partnership with the Safeguarding and Welfare Officer and Behaviour and Inclusion Officer.
- Monitors impact of SEND provision.

## Safeguarding and Welfare Officer (SGWO)

The SGWO plays a vital role in ensuring pupils are safe, present and emotionally ready to learn.

The SGWO:

- Supports the SENDCo in widening provision from SEND into attendance, safeguarding and pastoral elements.
- Monitors attendance and implements early intervention where attendance presents a barrier to foundational skill development.
- Works directly with vulnerable families to remove barriers to engagement.
- Leads safeguarding responses in line with statutory guidance.
- Contributes significantly to our Pupil Premium strategy, recognising that wellbeing and attendance are prerequisites for learning.

## Pastoral and Inclusion Team

### *Behaviour and Inclusion Officer (BIO)*

The BIO supports pupils whose learning behaviours present barriers to embedding foundational skills.

**The BIO:**

- Works directly with pupils to improve learning behaviours and emotional regulation.
- Supports teachers in implementing restorative approaches.
- Removes behavioural barriers preventing engagement in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics.
- Works closely with families to ensure consistency of expectations.

### *Learning Mentor*

- Supports pupils' emotional wellbeing and social development.
- Helps pupils overcome barriers to learning through targeted 1:1 and small-group support.
- Promotes positive attitudes, confidence, and resilience.
- Works with families and external agencies where appropriate to ensure consistent support.

## Parents and Carers

Parents and carers:

- Support daily reading at home.
- Encourage handwriting and spelling practice.
- Promote number fact fluency through TTRS and Numbots.
- Attend review meetings and engage with support plans.

## External Partnerships

We work in partnership with a range of external agencies and professionals to strengthen foundational skill development and remove barriers to learning. These include but are not limited to:

- **NHS Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) Therapist and Assistant** – providing assessment, direct intervention, programme design and staff training to support speech, language and communication development.
- **Early Years Inclusion Advisory Team** – supporting early identification of need, transition into Reception and modelling strategies for inclusive practice.
- **Leeds Inclusion Advisory Team – Cognition and Learning and SEMH Advisors** – offering advisory visits, graduated approach support and guidance for pupils with complex or emerging needs.
- **DAHIT - Deaf and Hearing Impairment Team** – providing specialist assessment, equipment advice, classroom adaptations and staff training to ensure pupils with hearing impairment can fully access phonics and language instruction.
- **Educational Psychology Service** – supporting cognitive assessment, learning recommendations and whole-school development.
- **CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)** – supporting pupils whose emotional wellbeing impacts readiness to learn.
- **Attendance Improvement Officers (Leeds City Council)** – working with families to improve attendance where this presents a barrier to securing foundational skills.
- **MindMate Support Team** - offering early emotional wellbeing support for young people up to 19 years old in education settings across Leeds.
- **Cluster and locality services** – including family support workers and targeted services accessed through the local cluster partnership.

- **Health professionals**, including school nursing and paediatric services, where medical needs impact learning access.

These partnerships ensure that pupils with additional needs, vulnerabilities or attendance barriers are supported holistically so foundational skills can be secured and sustained.

## 4. TEACHING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS IN RECEPTION (EYFS)

Our EYFS provision aligns with the Early Years Framework and our Teaching and Learning Policy.

### Communication and Language

- Language-rich environment.
- Explicit vocabulary teaching.
- Structured talk routines aligned to our whole-school Oracy Approach.
- Daily story discussion and role-play.

### Reading

- Daily systematic synthetic phonics through Floppy's Phonics.
- Decodable books aligned to phonics phase.
- Same-day keep-up sessions where required.
- Reading volunteers in weekly to provide frequent, high-quality opportunities for all children to be read with.

### Writing

- Explicit letter formation teaching.
- Fine motor development.
- Guided and independent writing opportunities.
- High-quality texts drive the writing curriculum to excite and engage children whilst exposing them to high level vocabulary.

## **Mathematics**

- Concrete–pictorial–abstract approach.
- Daily counting and number fluency practice.
- Targeted small group support where required.

# **5. CONTINUING AND DEVELOPING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS IN KS1 AND KS2**

## **Communication and Language**

- Explicit vocabulary instruction across subjects.
- Structured talk routines embedded across the curriculum.
- Progressive oracy expectations.

## **Reading**

- Continued phonics where required.
- Fluency development through repeated reading.
- Lexia for targeted reading intervention.
- Reading volunteers (School Readers) in weekly to provide frequent, high-quality opportunities for all children to be read with.

## **Writing**

- Explicit spelling instruction.
- Progressive handwriting expectations.
- Frequent short writes to develop stamina and fluency.
- High-quality texts drive the writing curriculum to excite and engage children whilst exposing them to high level vocabulary.

## Mathematics

- Daily arithmetic practice.
- Rapid recall of number facts.
- TTRS and Numbots to strengthen fluency.
- Mastering Number in KS1 to embed fluency and improve oracy.

Related Documents:

[Handwriting Policy March 2026 -2028](#)

[Handwriting progression.docx](#)

[English LTP Updated for 25-26.pptx](#)

Maths Policy

Calculation Guide

## 6. INTERVENTION AND CATCH-UP SUPPORT

### Keeping Up Model

- Same-day intervention for phonics gaps.
- Rapid small-group arithmetic support.
- No pupil waits for termly intervention cycles.

### Specific Interventions

- Floppy's Phonics catch-up groups
- Lexia reading support
- Alphabet Ark (ALK) early literacy programme
- Reading Volunteers Programme
- Daily keep-up sessions
- Other targeted interventions

## **Delivery Models**

- 1:1 sessions
- Small group sessions (2–4 pupils)
- Daily or 3–4 times weekly

## **Pupil Premium**

Pupil Premium funding is used to:

- Employ additional support staff.
- Fund structured interventions.
- Reduce group sizes.
- Support attendance, pastoral and behaviour systems that remove barriers to foundational learning.

# **7. SEND SUPPORT FOR FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS**

We follow the graduated approach: Assess, Plan, Do, Review.

IMP targets:

- Are precise and measurable.
- Link directly to the pupil's primary need.
- Focus on foundational gaps where relevant.

Specialist assessments and reasonable adjustments are implemented in partnership with external agencies.

# **8. CROSS-REFERENCES TO OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES**

Policies and documents found on SharePoint in Policies Folder and many shared-on School Website for external use as well.

- Teaching and Learning Policy

- SEND Policy
- Early Years Policy
- Handwriting policy
- [Handwriting progression.docx](#)
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- School Oracy Approach (currently being developed)

## 9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Leaders monitor foundational skills through:

- Lesson visits and phonics fidelity checks.
- Book scrutiny focusing on spelling, handwriting and arithmetic.
- Data analysis including phonics screening and multiplication check outcomes.
- Review of intervention impact.
- Governor oversight through curriculum and standards reporting.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if national guidance changes.

Manston Primary School is committed to ensuring that every pupil secures the foundational knowledge and skills needed to thrive. Through strong teaching, early intervention, safeguarding support and partnership with families and professionals, we ensure that no pupil is left behind.