

Strong Foundations

Research shows that high-quality early education lays the groundwork for future success, including academic achievement and overall wellbeing. The recent report from Ofsted, 'Strong Foundations in the First Years of School' (October 2024) highlights the critical importance of early education in setting children up for lifelong success.

At Millhouse Primary School, our early years and Key Stage 1 curriculum is designed to build strong foundational knowledge and skills in communication and language, phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. We ensure that children learn and consolidate essential knowledge, receiving sufficient practice before they move on and are not rushed to tackle complex tasks too quickly. For example within writing, we prioritise handwriting, spelling and composing simple sentences over producing lengthy pieces of text. We prioritise the foundational knowledge needed to access the curriculum in later years, ensuring there is not a focus on unnecessary content.

We are committed to ensuring that all children, including those with the lowest starting points, gain the foundational knowledge they need to succeed. Within early years, skilled staff promote high quality interactions with all children to build their knowledge, language and social skills. Direct teaching is balanced with high-quality, purposeful play-based learning opportunities, guided by knowledgeable staff. Teaching methods are selected to help children learn and remember important knowledge needed for future learning. Ongoing assessment is used to quickly identify any gaps in children's understanding and provide targeted, immediate support, ensuring every child keeps up, not just catches up. By explicitly teaching routines, social skills, and emotional regulation, we create a nurturing environment where all children feel secure and ready to learn.

Staff share important assessment information at key transition points, so that the next teacher has an accurate understanding of children's knowledge and understanding and any gaps which need addressing. Where older pupils have gaps in foundational knowledge in communication and language, reading, writing and mathematics, we ensure targeted teaching and practice is in place to support pupils to catch up, recognising the importance of securing strong foundations for later academic success and wellbeing.