POLICY DOCUMENT

Learning Environment Policy

Princess May Primary School's approach to the classroom and display environment — 2026–2027

Governing Body Representative (GBR)	Kristofer McGhee (Chair of Governors)
Signed by (GBR)	
Date approved	4 September 2026
Next review due by	September 2027
Related policies	Behaviour Policy; SEND Policy and SEND Information Report; Accessibility Plan
Aligned to	The school's values framework — Respect, Responsibility, Determination, Aspiration and Empathy — and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

1. Our values and strategic priorities

The learning environment at Princess May is built around our five school values: Respect, Responsibility, Determination, Aspiration and Empathy. These values should be visible and lived out in every classroom and communal space, not just named on a display.

Our commitment to staff

- Foster and develop the highest standards of teaching through high-quality professional development.
- Nurture and secure leadership talent to lead the future.
- Recognise and reward the commitment of all staff.
- Create and maintain a mutually supportive, collaborative and caring environment for all.
- Establish wellbeing and health as essential contributions to effectiveness at work.

Our strategic priorities

- Enrich the curriculum to maximise opportunities for children to develop their talents and interests.
- Create a culture of care and stimulate curiosity; build an environment of independence and collaboration for all pupils.
- Use high-quality and innovative approaches to teaching to promote progress and engagement.
- Enhance teaching and learning through ongoing professional development and continuous support.
- Build strong and flexible leadership structures.
- Ensure that every child learns to read.

2. Rationale

'Aesthetically pleasing surroundings influence both learning and social behaviour. Displays are focal points for learning. They show to a wider audience what the children have achieved while reaffirming the value of their work. Displays help children and teachers to see things in different ways and to make connections between ideas.'

Art, Craft and Design in the Primary School — editor John Lancaster

The learning environment adds greater depth and breadth to children's learning. It also raises self-esteem and encourages pride in the classroom and school. The learning environment at Princess May reinforces the school's commitment to high standards and our drive to continually raise achievement. This policy sets out our expectations for each classroom — including boards, fonts, book storage and tray labels — to ensure a shared understanding and consistency of approach across the whole school.

3. Aims

The school's aims for the learning environment are to:

- value and enhance children's work;
- reflect the vision and aims of the school towards excellence;
- celebrate achievement;
- increase children's self-esteem and pride in their work;
- motivate children by setting high standards to which they can aspire;
- create a stimulating teaching and learning environment;
- encourage aesthetic awareness and a positive attitude to our school environment;

- arouse curiosity, pose questions and stimulate enquiry;
- reflect and value different levels of achievement and cultural backgrounds; and
- inform and inspire parents, carers, governors, teachers and visitors to the school.

Individual teachers are responsible for the learning environment within their own classroom and designated areas.

4. Organisation

The learning environments of successful classrooms are calm, welcoming and stimulating, and place a high value on learning. The visual environment is important, and should display work that is representative of all children and all ability levels. Displays should reflect the taught curriculum and be changed regularly to sustain interest and discussion.

There is a calm environment when:

- children are on task;
- children are aware of acceptable noise levels for classwork, and teachers help maintain this by example;
- children are taught to tidy up after themselves;
- children know the teacher's rules and boundaries; and
- children have an appropriate amount of room for the activity.

The room is well organised when:

- teaching walls and book corner areas are labelled, so pupils can be independent and know what goes where;
- children's resources are accessible;
- there is a clear furniture layout, with no furniture in communal areas unless SLT has given permission;
- the room is kept tidy and clutter-free; and
- nothing is stuck directly onto the walls.

All classrooms follow the school's checklist for classroom content and organisation — see Appendix A.

5. The learning environment: working walls

Classroom learning environments for English, mathematics, science and humanities are based on the ‘working wall’ approach, where teachers' modelling and prompts are displayed as part of ongoing learning.

- Children's work is used to affirm the features of work that are desired.
- Vocabulary relevant to the focus of the learning is evident across all subjects.
- Displays using this approach are interactive, giving children the chance to engage with the display during the main teaching input, during the lesson, or informally to extend their learning — using a range of learning styles.
- Work on the working wall reflects the National Curriculum for each year group.
- Work on the working wall is not necessarily mounted, as it is expected to develop rapidly and change frequently.
- Teachers and pupils may write captions and posters by hand as part of the lesson, which are then displayed for reference; handwriting should not contradict the school's cursive handwriting style.
- All boards are backed in hessian, and teachers use push pins to put up work.

The following display boards must be in every classroom (KS1–KS2):

- Literacy working wall;
- Numeracy working wall;
- TTRS ‘Beat It’ Timetables;
- Science working wall;
- Humanities (History/Geography) working wall;
- RE working wall;
- Spanish working wall;
- Destination Reader working wall; and
- Phonics/DSR working wall (KS1).

Further detail on what each working wall must include is set out in Appendix C.

6. Whole school areas

A display should always have one or more of the following specific purposes:

- to stimulate interest in a theme;
- to introduce, summarise or reinforce knowledge and skills; and
- to celebrate children's work.

Displays should include:

- the year group and title;
- information — pictures, reference materials, word banks and similar — to encourage interaction and enquiry;
- process — stimulus material and evidence of the work's evolution;
- outcomes — the final results;
- links to SMSC and British Values where possible; and
- no single-use plastic, such as lamination.

7. Content

- Clear labels and headings indicating the title of the work, and the subject or topic it relates to.
- Information about the process involved.
- The year group of the children, when the display is outside an individual classroom.
- Links to SMSC and British Values where possible.

8. Style

A variety of written text styles should be used — for example, handwritten by pupils or adults, or computer fonts.

- Display work should be accessible to children and easy to read — not too busy.
- Staples should be completely removed when changing a display.
- Children's work should be backed on black poster paper.
- Hessian should be used for all displays.
- Each display area should have a border, in black, white or brown, surrounding the work.

9. Whole school display

Main display areas in the school's communal areas are changed on rotation.

- There is a showcase of events from across the term, from all year groups, in the school foyer.
- Work on display reflects the current learning in the school.
- All displays in the main foyer must be agreed by the Deputy Headteacher, and put up complete — no ongoing displays.

All displays should reflect the professional and innovative nature of the work carried out in the school.

10. EYFS learning environment

The indoor learning environment

Early Years classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely, with areas where children can be active, quiet or creative. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children can find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The outdoor environment

The Foundation Stage has enclosed outdoor areas, and children can free-flow between indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers opportunities to do things differently and at different scales than indoors: children can explore, use their senses, develop language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside, enabling children to develop across all areas of learning.

Learning outside the classroom supports healthy, active lifestyles by offering physical activity, freedom, movement and a sense of wellbeing. It gives children contact with the natural world and experiences unique to being outdoors, such as direct contact with the weather and seasons, and supports problem-solving, creativity, imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness. The outdoor environment also offers more space than indoors, which particularly benefits children who learn best through active movement. Families are asked to provide appropriate all-purpose clothing — wellington boots and rainproof macs with hoods — so we can learn outside whatever the weather.

11. Guidance notes for display

There should be a mix of pupils' work, information for pupils, information for adults, evidence of our community and ethnic mix, evidence of achievement, and working walls.

- Do not stick anything directly onto walls.
- Areas for display must be backed using hessian, and bordered using black, white or brown.
- Published work should be mounted, titled with an indication of the learning involved, and labelled with the pupil's name, class and date.
- Work or items of display should be clear and not overlap, unless this is an integral part of the display's design rather than a result of running out of space.
- Work and posters must not be stuck on windows; obscuring windows is contrary to access and inclusion advice, and presents a poor impression from outside.
- Pupils' work on a designated learning wall will show work in progress.
- All notices should be up to date and attractive.
- All displays and notices should have correct spelling, syntax and punctuation, other than on working walls, where work in progress by pupils may be displayed.
- Working walls should reflect current learning.

12. Monitoring and review

Classrooms and communal displays are monitored against the checklists in Appendices A and B, with feedback given to teachers and a follow-up date agreed. This policy is reviewed at least annually, and approved by the Headteacher and governing board.

13. Links with other policies

- Behaviour Policy;
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report; and
- Accessibility Plan.

Appendix A: Learning environment and display monitoring checklist

Used by SLT when monitoring classrooms. For each item, record whether it is complete, or needs to be developed, with comments.

Must-haves

Item	Completed / comments	Need to be developed / comments
Rotas and timetables		
‘Stay on Green’ display		
Class groupings / seating plan		
Medium-term / curriculum overview		
Marking reminders		
Daily timetable		
Vulnerable groups and DSL leads		

Systems for organisation

Item	Completed / comments	Need to be developed / comments
Teaching walls tidy and resources clearly labelled		
Clear and tidy teacher areas		
Name tray labels printed		
Stimulating and inviting book corner		
Phonics board (KS1)		
Job list / class monitors, where appropriate		

English (KS1 / KS2)

Item	Completed / comments	Need to be developed / comments
Updated Destination Reader (KS2) and literacy displays		
Key vocabulary and learning focus displayed		
Punctuation display for the year group		
Grammar splats with post-its		
‘Books we have read’ display		
Phonics chart		

Item	Completed / comments	Need to be developed / comments
Tidy, inviting book corner with frontward-facing books and topic books — not overcrowded		

Mathematics

Item	Completed / comments	Need to be developed / comments
Key vocabulary and learning focus		
Maths investigation resources / table		
Maths meeting display		
‘Beat It’ Timetables display		
Number line on teaching walls		
Curricular mathematics targets		
Visual models to support the taught strategy		
Mathematics resources labelled		

Science

Item	Completed / comments	Need to be developed / comments
Key vocabulary and learning focus		
Scientific principles displayed		
Investigative language displayed		
‘Let's investigate’ / topic table (hands-on, tactile)		

SEND and inclusion

Item	Completed / comments	Need to be developed / comments
Visual timetables		
Areas for resources for individual children		
Pictorial supports		
Vulnerable groups document		
Confident displays that reflect		

Item	Completed / comments	Need to be developed / comments
all pupils		

Appendix B: Read Write Inc Phonics — classroom organisation checklist

Completed for each teaching area (1–8) that delivers Read Write Inc Phonics.

Display items

Item	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
An ordinary whiteboard or flipchart for writing activities								
The simple or complex Speed Sounds chart, displayed where children can see it								
A large pocket chart displaying: the Storybook or non-fiction title and a few relevant artefacts/pictures; Story Green Words for the story; Red Words for the story; recently taught Speedy Green Words; and previously taught Red Words needing further practice								
Apron, to carry Speed Sound Cards and Phonics Green Word Cards								

Items for teachers to prepare before lessons

Item	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Sticky notes with prepared TOLs, for Ditty and Storybook lessons								
Story introduction — printed from online if preferred, and practised								

Appendix C: Guidance for working walls

All working walls must be hessian-backed with a black, white or brown border and clear labels. Reference photographs of exemplar working walls for each subject are held by the Assistant Headteacher and displayed in the staff area; each wall follows the general requirements set out in section 5, with the subject-specific elements below.

- Literacy wall: current model text, key vocabulary, sentence structures and grammar focus, and exemplar pupil work.
- Numeracy / Maths Meeting wall: key vocabulary, the current learning focus, and concrete/pictorial resources relevant to the taught strategy.
- Science wall: key vocabulary, the current topic title and scientific principles being taught, and evidence of the class's learning journey.
- History/Geography wall: a subject title reflecting the current focus, key vocabulary and a timeline or map relevant to the topic.
- RE wall: a subject title reflecting the current focus, key vocabulary, and reference material for the religion or theme being studied.
- Destination Reader wall: a washing line of prior class books, Destination Reader resources and sentence stems, and the key Destination Reader book and author currently being studied.
- Phonics wall (KS1): the current sounds and words being taught, in line with the school's phonics programme.
- Spanish wall: key vocabulary and phrases for the current unit, displayed clearly for reference.
- Book corner: frontward-facing books on display, kept tidy and inviting, with topic-relevant books included.
- Behaviour chart and Zones of Regulation display: each pupil's named pocket and card, and the Zones of Regulation colours with corresponding tools, as set out in the Behaviour Policy.
- Communal area displays: pupils' work, mounted and titled, with the pupil's name on at least one piece; an interactive element; a blurb describing the work; a year group label; and a colourful, complete border.