



Foundational Knowledge and Skills at Great Chart Primary School SEPTEMBER 2026

At Great Chart Primary School, our aim is to create strong foundations for every child, enabling them to grow in confidence and build upon these foundations as they continue their educational journey.

Strong Foundations refers to guidance published by the Department for Education and Ofsted that highlights the importance of making sure every child in the early years and early primary stages (Reception and Key Stage 1) builds the essential **knowledge and skills** they need to thrive throughout their whole school life. However, at Great Chart Primary School, this concept may also be applicable to some children within KS2.

At its heart, this means:

- **Securing the Basics Early**

It's about ensuring that children have a really strong grounding in the fundamentals — such as communication, early reading and phonics, writing, maths, and social and physical development — before they are asked to do more complex tasks. Children need repeated practice and teaching of core skills so that they remember and can confidently use them later on.

- **A Clear and Coherent Curriculum**

Schools should be clear about *what* children need to learn and *when*, and make sure learning is sequenced properly so that each new step builds carefully on what came before. Children benefit most when learning is structured, well-planned, and matched to their developmental stage.

- **Focus on Fluency and Mastery**

Rather than rushing into more challenging work, children are supported to become fluent — that is, comfortable and confident — in key skills like reading, writing and number work before they move on. This supports confidence, later learning and enjoyment of school.

- **Helping All Children Succeed**

The guidance highlights that strong foundations are especially important for children who start school with lower levels of knowledge or confidence, or who have had limited early learning opportunities. The aim is for **every child to have the solid building blocks they need** so they're ready for the rest of their education.

So, when we talk about *Strong Foundations* at school, we mean:

- Teaching and reinforcing the basics in a way that makes sense to our learners
- Making sure children have lots of opportunities to practice and become confident
- Helping children feel successful and ready for future learning
- Planning learning carefully so each step fits with what children already know

This is not about “teaching to a test” — it’s about giving children **a really solid start** in their Primary Education that helps them feel confident, curious and capable as they continue through school.

Maths

Mastering Number aims to secure firm foundations in the development of good number sense for all children from Reception through to Year 1 and Year 2 (and further if necessary). Our aim over time is that children will leave KS1 with fluency in calculation and confidence and flexibility with number. Attention will be given to key knowledge and understanding needed in Reception classes, and progression through KS1 and KS2 (if necessary) to support success in the future.

Phonics

The school uses Rocket Phonics as its phonics scheme. Daily lessons achieve a focus on what needs to be learned, without extraneous distracting activity. Daily lessons get to the true understanding of the purpose of the learning so that children know that each new sound learned means that they can read more words. This is immediately demonstrated through reading words and sentences in the lesson, and applied in fully decodable reading books during reading practice sessions.

Spelling

Spelling starts in Year 1 through our phonics programme, where children learn sounds, spelling patterns and common exception words. From Year 2 onwards, Rocket Phonics bridges phonics and formal spelling, following a structured daily spelling programme that builds on routines and introduces new rules and patterns in a clear, systematic way. In KS2 Spelling Shed is used to ensure progression from Year 3.

Children revisit tricky concepts regularly and practise applying their spelling in everyday writing. We assess spelling frequently and regroup children to ensure they receive the right level of challenge and support. Our approach helps children become confident, accurate spellers who can use their knowledge independently.

Handwriting

At Great Chart Primary, we place high importance on the development of transcription skills. Children receive explicit teaching in:

- Handwriting
- Spelling
- Punctuation

Handwriting is taught progressively across the school through daily practice and is viewed as an essential skill that supports fluency, stamina and presentation. Children are expected to apply taught handwriting consistently across the curriculum.

Handwriting begins in the early years through daily lessons using the cursive script. Children learn correct letter formation using consistent routines, rhymes and fine-motor activities. This gives them the strong foundations they need for future writing.

As children move into Key Stage 1, they learn to place letters correctly on the line, form capital letters and numbers accurately, and develop control over size and spacing. From Year 2 onwards, children are taught to join their handwriting progressively, aiming for fluent, legible writing across all subjects by the end of Key Stage 2.

We monitor progress closely and provide additional support where needed, such as small-group teaching, fine-motor strengthening activities or personalised guidance. Our aim is for every child to write comfortably, confidently and with pride.

Oracy

Oracy is the foundation of confident communication. We teach it explicitly and weave it through everyday classroom practice, so every child learns to speak clearly, listen carefully and share their ideas with confidence.

Teachers model high-quality spoken language and use simple, structured talk routines - such as talking partners and sentence stems – to ensure all children have the opportunity to speak aloud. These skills are introduced gradually from the early years through to Year 6, helping children learn how to take turns, explain their thinking and respond to others respectfully.

Across all subjects, children use talk to explore ideas, reason, justify, debate and present. Storytelling, role-play, discussions, problem-solving in maths and presenting findings in science all give purposeful opportunities to develop vocabulary and communication skills.

We create a positive classroom culture where every child's voice is valued. Through ongoing observation and gentle guidance, teachers support all children to grow into confident, articulate communicators.



Great Chart Primary School- Foundational Knowledge and Skills



Name:

Executive Function	
Working Memory	
Remember and follow multi-step instructions involving three or more steps	
Recalls and apply the rules of games independently	
Holds in memory the information needed to solve simple puzzles	
Focuses on the right topic when contributing to discussions	
Inhibitory Control	
Waits their turn without showing impatience	
Sustains focus on an activity for an extended period	
Reflects and strategies before responding or reacting	
Expresses feelings without acting out emotions	
Cognitive flexibility	
Thinks of more than one way to solve a problem or complete a task	
Participates in activities which require listening to others and contributing at the right time (such as singing rounds)	
Adapts to unexpected changes in their daily routine	
Ability to assess their own individual strengths and next steps.	

Early Reading	
Word Reading	
Apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words	
Respond speedily with the correct sound/grapheme for all 40+ phonemes	
Read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words	

Read aloud accurately and with increasing fluency books that are consistent with developing phonic knowledge with developing phonic knowledge	
Read common exception words without needing to blend	
Comprehension	
Check the text makes sense to them as they read and correct any errors independently	
Re-tell familiar stories with increasing detail	
Predict what might happen and the basis of what has been read so far	
Make simple inferences about why a character might feel a certain way	
Discuss word meaning and link those meanings to words already known	
Understand that non-fiction texts give factual information	

Early Writing	
Transcription	
Holds a pencil correctly using the tripod grip	
Forms lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place	
Forms capital letters correctly	
Segments spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes, spelling some correctly	
Correctly spells most Year 1 common exception words	
Leaves a space between words	
Says out loud what they are going to write about	
Composes a sentence orally before writing it	
Reads back what they have written	
Accurately writes sentences dictated by an adult that include the phonics sounds and common exception words taught so far	
Demarcates some sentences with capital letters and full stops	

Communication and Language	
Physical	

Can control the speed and volume of their voice when talking aloud	
Beginning to use gestures and expression to help make their point	
Uses eye contact and faces the speaker when listening	
Linguistic	
Uses sentence stems to link others' ideas	
Uses new and appropriate (taught) vocabulary about a topic	
Cognitive	
Organises clearly what they want to say	
Asks relevant questions of others	
Gives reasons / justifies what or why they are saying something	
Social and emotional	
Take turns to talk and listen	
Begins to think about their audience when communicating	
Can retell and repeat a response	

Early Mathematics	
Place value and the number system	
Count reliably with numbers from 1- 20	
Place numbers 1 -20 in order	
Say which is one more or one less than a given number.	
Operations	
Add and subtract two-single digit numbers counting on or back	
Double numbers from 1-10	
Half even numbers from 1-10	
Language and vocabulary	
Use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare objects	
Recognise and describe patterns	
Uses mathematical language and sentence stems taught	
Transcription	

Forms all numbers correctly	
Sets out work using one digit per square when recording	