The Foundation stage is a specialist provision within Stony Dean School that supports pupils with significant learning needs.

Each Key Stage contains a group of pupils who require a primary model of learning and who are working within the lower National Curriculum levels. These pupils are placed into Nurture Groups where they will receive specialist support to enable them to access the curriculum and follow the routines of the school. They are fully integrated into their tutor groups and participate successfully in the life of Stony Dean School.

Nurture groups are small, structured teaching groups for pupils showing signs of behavioural, social, educational or emotional needs. Through these groups, pupils can learn to build positive relationships with adults and with other pupils, access a curriculum that is specifically suited to their level of learning and develop strategies to help them cope with their emotions.

A full and varied curriculum has been produced in the Foundation Stage with a strong focus on developing basic Literacy and Numeracy skills. The wider curriculum which incorporates PSHCE, Daily Living Skills, Horticulture, Science and Food Technology enables pupils to develop basic practical skills, a key factor in raising self-esteem.

For some pupils in the Foundation Stage, PECS (A Picture Exchange Communication System) is commonly used. This is a communication aid for children with [autism spectrum disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autism_spectrum_disorder) (ASD) or who have various communicative, cognitive, and physical impairments.

In addition, a small number of pupils will be supported using aspects of the TEACCH approach to learning in response to their identified Autistic Spectrum Condition.

