



Whitleigh Primary School
Early Years Policy
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Version Control Sheet

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Whitleigh Primary School Early Years Policy

Context

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Whitleigh Primary School, the Nursery is the first stage of the Early Years Unit, which offers 10 places for 2-year-old children. The next phase of the Early Years Unit is the Pre-School, offering 52 places for 3 and 4-year-old children. Both the Nursery and Pre-School provide tailored and professional education to children by Qualified Teachers, Early Years Practitioners and Teaching and Learning Assistants. Children attend for fifteen funded hours per week (flexible sessions offered) during school terms. We also offer Parents/Carers the opportunity to purchase additional sessions if they wish to do so. In addition, Pre-School children may be eligible for 30 hours funding. Pre-School children then make a seamless transition to the Reception classes, since they are already familiar with the staff, classrooms and outdoor learning area. The Reception Unit holds 60 children; which are split into two classes each with a Teacher and Teaching and Learning Assistants who work across the unit, providing a high-quality education for every child. In partnerships with Parents and Carers, we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. In the EYFS, we endeavour to ensure that children “learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.” We aim to support children in their learning through “teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2023) This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2023 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A Unique Child: every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships: children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Enabling environments: children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Learning and development: the importance of learning and development and how children develop and learn at different rates. (See “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

In Whitleigh Primary School's Early Years Unit these principles of education are practised.

Intent

At Whitleigh Primary School, we believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage is crucial in securing solid foundations for our children’s future learning. It is our intent that the children who enter our EYFS develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and learning. We believe that all children deserve to be valued as an individual and we are passionate in allowing all children to achieve their full, unique potential. With all of this in mind, we begin each new year by looking at the individual needs of our children and – considering their different starting points- we then carefully develop our flexible EYFS Curriculum which enables them to follow the path of their learning journey, at a point, that is suitable for their unique needs and stage of development.

The main aims of our curriculum are:

- Aspirations – We want our children and staff to have high expectations of learning. Children are encouraged to aim high and to be open to possibilities at school and beyond.
- Vocabulary – We want our children to speak with confidence and fluency in a range of situations. We believe that helping our children find their voice is important and will work to broaden their vocabulary and encourage talk in all areas of learning.

- Experiences – Children cannot aspire to things they have never encountered. We will work to broaden our children’s horizons, expanding their knowledge of the world by providing them with rich, first hand learning experiences to take the curriculum beyond the classroom and develop their love of learning, independence and critical thinking.

At Whitleigh Primary, we promise:

- To provide a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning, which meets the individual needs and interests of the children.
- To develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults.
- To provide a high quality curriculum in line with the statutory framework for the early years.
- To support children’s awareness of moral and social values.
- To develop a positive sense of self and the ability to self-regulate.
- To encourage active learning through first-hand experiences both in indoor and outdoor play, and through both verbal and non-verbal communication. (In support of RRSA Article 31)
- To encourage children to become self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline.
- To value the cultural diversity within our school and community. (In support of RRSA Articles 2, 12, 13, 14 & 15)
- To foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents. Children will have a natural preference for a particular adult. This person, where possible, becomes that child’s ‘key person’. All staff in the setting contribute towards the care and learning for the children and their parents. (In support of RRSA Articles 5 & 18)

Implementation

Approaches to Planning, Learning and Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- Teachers, Early Years Practitioners and Teaching and Learning Assistants plan opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence. We use a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs.
- We provide a curriculum with a balanced approach between child initiated and teacher directed activities.
- We provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued and celebrated.
- We ensure that the outdoor learning environment provides challenge across all areas of learning.
- We use our observations which stimulate discussion into personalised learning for every child.
- We plan for differentiation, including necessary support for children with SEND and ensuring that more able children are given tasks that will challenge and stimulate their thinking.
- We monitor children’s progress and provide next steps to support them throughout their Foundation Stage.

Positive Relationships

At Whitleigh Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents/Carers

We recognise that Parents/Carers are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value the contributions they make. We recognise the role that Parents/Carers have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- Asking Parents/Carers to complete admission forms, medical form, disability form, etc. In Nursery and Pre-School, this takes place during a ‘Settle Session’ whereby the Parents/Carers will meet with a member of the Nursery and Pre-School Unit and the child will get the opportunity to explore their new environment.

- For Reception children, an information morning in June where they receive the 'Welcome to Reception Information Pack' and the School Prospectus which highlights school start and finish times, uniform and informs the Parents/Carers of the school's vision and aims.
- Asking Parents/Carers to sign permission slips for visits out of school, photographs of their child for assessment purposes and using the internet at school, prior to their children starting Whitleigh Primary School.
- Ask Parents/Carers to complete an 'All About Me' activity with their child over the Summer, where they will write a passport about their child including their likes and dislikes. This will form a display and the basis for our topic learning at the start of the Autumn Term.
- Encouraging Parents/Carers to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns prior to requesting meetings with Senior Leaders.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings providing information about other areas of the curriculum, e.g. Meet the Team, Early Reading, Phonics and Maths.
- Talking to Parents/Carers about their child before their child starts in our school, through planned conversations and home visits with Parents/Carers and visiting the children in their current Nursery settings. This also ensures that children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- Parents/Carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Parents/Carers can view and comment upon their child's Learning Journey (via Tapestry) whenever they would like to.
- Asking Parents/Carers to record any significant events and/or development in their child's learning through their Tapestry account.
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and Parents/Carers: School trips, special celebrations, Christmas Performances, Sports Day, etc.
- Contact through Online Reading Diaries as well as the acknowledgement that Parents/Carers can ring school to contact staff or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Parents/Carers are made aware of the curriculum and ongoing activities through the termly bubble sheet which explains what the children will be learning across the curriculum for that term.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

All children and families are valued at Whitleigh Primary School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential SEND is identified at the earliest opportunity. Early identification of SEND is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with Parents/Carers at an early stage. Please see our SEND policy or SEND information report for further information.

Welfare

It is important to ensure that all children in our school are safe. In the EYFS, we aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choice to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all our children.

Staffing and Key Worker Responsibilities

All staff working within the Early Years Unit aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively and taking time to listen to them.

Nursery

10 places for 2 year olds

1 Room Leader

1 Teaching and Learning Assistant

52 places for 3 and 4 year olds

1 Teacher

1 Teaching and Learning Assistant

Reception Classes

60 place Reception intake

2 Teachers

1 Teaching and Learning Assistant

Key Workers

In order to meet the individual needs of all children, the Early Years Unit assigns a Key Worker to each child when they enter the setting in Nursery and Pre-School. A Key Worker will help each child to become familiar with the provision and to feel confident and safe within it. They will meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour. The Key Worker will endeavour to make close links with the Parents/Carers of their key children to make sure that each child is being cared for appropriately and in line with the wishes of each family. In Reception, the teachers act as 'Key Workers' to all children in the Reception Unit and our TLAs contribute to this information.

Intimate Care

Some children in the setting, depending on age, stage and development will need support toileting and the Key Worker will support the child and work closely with Parents/Carers. Please refer to the Intimate Care Policy. Staff are able to provide advice and assistance to Parents/Carers wishing to support their child in their transition out of nappies.

Staff Medication

Practitioners working in the Early Years setting, who are taking medication have agreed to inform the Head of School and Human Resources if it could affect their ability to care for children.

Organisation and Learning Environment Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning. The EYFS classroom and learning spaces are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or complete tasks more quietly. The classroom covers all learning areas, where children are able to access equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class have their own large enclosed outdoor area which has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the ability to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help them to develop their gross motor skills in all areas of learning. Children are encouraged to learn independently during 'Adventure Time' but are also guided by Challenges, which encourages focus, engagement and opportunities to retrieve prior knowledge. Throughout Adventure Time, the outside and inside areas are always available throughout the day. At timetabled intervals, children are taught in small groups with a Teacher or Key Worker and is supported by the TLA. Nursery, Pre-School and Reception children have access to snack and water at all points during the day. In the Nursery, snack is modelled and supported by a Key Worker.

Effective Learning

Effective Learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interests. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are sometimes recorded in the children's Learning Journeys on Tapestry.

Nursery and Pre-School

Nursery and Pre-School 15 hour sessions are split into two sessions: 8:45am – 11:45am and 12:15pm – 3:15pm. Parents are able to use their funded hours flexibly. 30 hour funded sessions are 9.15am – 3.15pm.

Reception

Reception children arrive at 8:45am for 'Linked Provision' and doors close for registration at 8:55am. Lunch is between 11:45 am and 1:00pm. The children are collected at 3:15pm through the Reception doors.

Health and Safety

At Whitleigh Primary School, there are clear procedures for assessing risk which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. A risk assessment for the provision is available on request.

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times. Milk and fruit are also available during the session.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- A first aider is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept always.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy.
- A safeguarding policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use.
- Regular risk assessments are carried out on both resources and the environment (both immediate to the Early Years Unit and in the wider school grounds) to ensure the safety of all children and adults.
- Daily Checks of the Early Years environment are completed within Nursery and Pre-School Unit every day.

Collecting Children

The registration form lists the Parents/Carers who will normally collect the children at the end of the session. If there is an emergency, the Parent/Carer must ring the school and let them know who will be collecting the child. In the Nursery and Pre-School, a password will be provided if a different adult is collecting the child.

Medicines

At Whitleigh Primary School, we undertake a whole school Medicines Policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the system for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. For further information, please see our Medicines Policy.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The EYFS Profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Early Years curriculum for Nursery and Pre-School through to Reception has been carefully planned to ensure that children have varied opportunities and experiences that allow them to progress from each stage of their Early Years journey onto the next and are prepared for the future. Throughout their time in the Reception Year, our children partake in an ambitious curriculum which is designed to allow for cumulative progression that builds on the skills they have previously learned in Nursery and Pre-School, enabling them to work towards reaching their Early Learning Goals (ELGs) at the end of their Reception Year. These goals are the descriptors for each area of the framework.

The EYFS Profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is based upon ongoing observations and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning, and the three learning characteristics; these are set out below:

The prime areas of learning:

- Communication and Language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

The specific areas of learning:

- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- Understanding of the World (UW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by Parents/Carers and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's Parents/Carers and agree how to support the child further.

At Whitleigh Primary School, "Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning. As children grow older and move into the reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for year 1." (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021).

Planning and guided children's activities will reflect the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. At Whitleigh Primary School, we support children in using the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These are:

- **Playing and Exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **Active Learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Nursery and Pre-School

Each Key Worker is responsible for an Online Learning Journey for each child in their key worker group and each term, this will include observations, direct speech from the child, photographs of different activities, adult directed activities, WOW moments from events and WOW moments from home. In addition to this, each child's online learning journey is contributed to and monitored by the child's class teacher.

Reception

In Reception, each teacher is responsible for the Online Learning Journeys in their class. However, Teaching and Learning Assistants, Parents/Carers and other agencies will contribute to these. Each term they will include observations, direct speech from the child, photographs of different activities, adult directed activities, WOW comments from home, WOW moments from event and school trips and learning from home.

Upon joining Reception, the children will partake in the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) which is a short, interactive assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts Reception. "The RBA assesses a child in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. The purpose of the RBA is to form the starting point for cohort-level school progress measures. Data from the RBA is compared to Key Stage 2 outcomes 7 years later to form the overall progress measure for a school." (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021).

For each Early Learning Goal, the class teacher must judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of the Reception Year (expected) or not yet reaching this level (emerging). In the final term of Nursery, Pre-School and Reception a written report is sent to Parents/Carers reporting on the Prime and Specific areas of development and the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. Parents/Carers will also be able to download a PDF version of their child's online Learning Journey via Tapestry.

Transition from Reception to Year One

Children visit their new class teacher in their new classroom in Term Six. The classrooms in Year One are set out with similar areas to ensure a smooth transition into Key Stage One. Year One teachers are given a copy of the EYFS Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year One teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year One. Year One teachers carefully plan continuous provision into their school day so that children quickly assimilate their learning and become ready for their next step of education.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Headteacher every 2 years and shared with the governing board.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Nursery Admission Policy
- Nursery Late Collection Policy