

**Policy Updated: September
2021**

Review Date: September 2022



Whitehouse Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy outlines the purposes, nature and management of Foundation Stage education at Whitehouse Primary School. Within this document, the term Foundation is used to describe children who attend school prior to Year 1 and the term Practitioner refers to the adults working alongside your children.

At Whitehouse Primary:

- We aspire to ignite a passion for life-long learning.
- We are committed in our pursuit for excellence.
- We are committed to give our children the best possible future life chances, without limits on learning, attainment and achievement. We have a genuine belief that, given the opportunities, every child can succeed.
- We aspire to develop great thinkers, who are independent, resilient and embrace challenges and new experiences.
- We encourage co-operation and collaboration, everyone taking responsibility for all that they say and do.
- We provide exciting but safe and secure spaces, indoors and outdoors, where children can explore, discover and experiment.
- We value everyone as an individual and encourage respect for others and their opinions.
- We aim to develop a strong community spirit in our children that helps them to become positive, active responsible citizens in the future.
- We celebrate and respect the diverse community in which we live and appreciate our responsibilities as global citizens.

We aim to create an ethos where:

- A welcoming atmosphere is created in school, where children, staff, parents and visitors feel valued.
- Our children are happy, feel safe and supported and enjoy coming to school.
- Our children demonstrate good manners and show consideration to and for others.
- Our children are keen, enthusiastic and totally engaged in their learning.
- There is a growth mind-set. We stay positive, we value learning from mistakes and we keep going when things become tough.
- Our children are reflective and thoughtful about their experiences.

- Our children are motivated and have the confidence to challenge themselves as learners.
- Our school environment supports children's learning and values their achievements.
- Teaching is creative, exciting and stimulates and extends children's thinking.
- Our children have a genuine pride in themselves, their efforts and achievements. Talents and creativity are nurtured and encouraged.
- Our staff are committed professionals who demonstrate a love of teaching, a passion for their own, as well as children's learning and development, and genuine care for the children they teach.
- We have high expectations for all within our community to ensure that we demonstrate the very best standards of conduct, moral purpose and integrity.

There is a consistency of expectation that everyone, irrespective of gender, race or culture, should feel safe and secure, have empathy for others, and place a high value upon individual achievement and personal development.

Foundation Stage Education

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

(Statutory Framework for the EYFS, DFE 2021)

Aims and principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) became a statutory framework for all children from birth to five from September 2008. The framework was revised and published on 31st March 2021 and became effective from 1st September 2021.

Standards set by the EYFS state that all early years' providers must ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school and gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide a solid foundation for their future progress through school and life.

The Early Years Curriculum for the Foundation Stage forms the first stage of our whole school curriculum.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The learning and development requirements cover:

- The areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early years settings
- The early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five)
- Assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers).

Four guiding principles shape practice in early years settings. These are:

1. Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
3. 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.
4. importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and becoming an effective learner. They underpin learning and development across all areas.

- By **playing and exploring** children find out and explore, use what they know in their play and become willing to have a go
- Through **active learning** children are involved and develop their concentration skills, perseverance and gain a sense of enjoyment through achieving what they set out to do
- By **creating and thinking critically** children have their own ideas, use what they already know to learn new things and choose ways to do things including finding new skills, strategies and techniques.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas, the **prime** areas, are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Educational programmes must involve activities and experiences for children, as follows.

- **Communication and language development** involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Literacy development** involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

At Whitehouse Primary School...

We believe that every child matters and deserves the best possible start to their school life.

We believe that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships.

We believe that the learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development.

We believe that play based learning is paramount, and we believe that our children should have opportunities to direct their own learning across the areas of learning and development.

We believe that the 'characteristics of effective learning' underpin learning and development across all areas and support children to become effective and motivated learners.

We believe that children's well-being, enjoyment and learning go hand in hand and are at the heart of everything we do.

We believe that successful transitions must consider the children's needs from all angles and involve all key stakeholders.

Our learning environment and curriculum

Our learning environment is organised into areas of continuous provision providing the children with opportunities for child-initiated learning both indoors and outdoors. Continuous Provision Plans highlight ongoing learning opportunities with reference to:

- Resources and enhancements,
- Ideas for scaffolding/individual children's next steps
- What practitioners should observe and assess

We recognise that young children do not necessarily learn in a linear way and plan to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that touches on all aspects across the year, based on the observations of children's play and what their interests are. This appears in the weekly enhancements to the continuous provision, as well as in the adult-led focus and group-time work.

As our planning is child centred, driven by individual interests and next steps, we follow a loosely structured yearly overview plan, the only fixed themes being transitional provision, key seasonal interests and celebrations such as Christmas and Diwali.

Medium Term planning is used by class teachers to ensure a balance of provision and also respond to children's interests. Through tracking of progress of individual children and the cohort, areas for development are highlighted and planned for. Opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning are also identified to ensure regular opportunities and a variety of ways to be involved throughout the year.

As part of our provision we deliver Maths inputs following the Maths Mastery approach, and Literacy inputs in line with the Fantastic Foundations, Write Stuff approach. Our Phonics programme compliments RWI resources to support children to build the foundations for literacy, communication, understanding and enjoyment of stories, books and rhymes, recognising that print carries meaning, and beginning to read and write words and simple sentences.

SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) is delivered as part of our whole school ethos and in line with some of our PSHE links. In the Early Years at Whitehouse primary we are constantly encouraging and teaching our children to have the ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values. We foster a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them and practise our use of imagination and creativity. We offer experiences to be reflective about our own learning and behaviour and are always teaching and nurturing our children to help them best understand the consequences of their behaviours and actions. Each child will build resilience and confidence, being able to understand their own and others' emotions. The early learning goals in the area of 'understanding the world' help us to teach the foundations of acceptance and engagement with all the fundamental British values. This enables our children to develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

Key Person

In Nursery – F1 - there is a nursery manager who is responsible for overseeing the whole cohort alongside the EYFS phase lead, whilst each child in our Nursery Class are also assigned to a key person whose role is to ensure that their individual needs are met. The key person will help the children to settle into our school and become familiar within the setting.

In our Foundation classes – F2- your child will have a class teacher and often a teaching assistant working alongside them and supporting them.

Reception age children:

A fruit or vegetable snack is provided by the Government (free entitlement).

Children have access to their water bottles and are able to drink at any time.

Children under five receive a free carton of milk every day; parents have the option to pay for milk when their child reaches five years of age.

Children are entitled to one of our free, hot, healthy school meals.

Children are organised into classes and each class is managed by a teacher and supported by a Teaching Assistant or Nursery Nurse.

Classrooms are used for registration and whole class activities. During 'own learning' time children have free flow access between the indoor classrooms, shared area and the outdoor classroom.

Small groups working with students or parent helpers are always supervised by members of staff.

Outdoor activities

The outdoor classroom offers further opportunities for children to learn and is an essential part of EYFS Curriculum.

The outdoor classroom is a safe, purpose built space where children can develop their physical skills and learn through continuous provision and directed activities. All prime and specific areas of learning are catered for within this learning environment.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. On-going assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

For whole school aspects of assessment, recording and reporting, please refer to the school policy on assessment.

Our assessment procedures are:

On entry to Nursery

The assigned Key Person spends time getting to know the child and speaks with parents/carers. They discuss their child's interests, skills, difficulties and any other information they feel useful or relevant. Informal entry level assessment is made by practitioners during the first half term – this is through observation and recorded as a Baseline on our Assessment System O'track.

On entry to the school – Reception

Records of transfer are received from pre-school settings; these record the developmental stage each child is performing in within the seven areas of learning.

Teachers make home visits in September, where parents can share their child's interests, skills, difficulties and any other information they feel useful or relevant. Informal entry level assessment is made by practitioners during the first 4 weeks of school – this is through observation and recorded as a Baseline on our Assessment System O'track. A statutory Reception Baseline Assessment will also be carried out, this is a short assessment.

Through the year

Practitioners record daily observations of children's learning which feeds into our continuous assessment and planning cycle.

Teachers complete phonics and maths assessments each half term alongside a reading consultation.

An Autumn Parents' Evening focuses on how children have settled into school and their Personal, Social, and Emotional development. A Spring Parents' Evening focuses on the progression made from entry. Practitioners continually set next steps for the children ensuring they make maximum progress in all areas of learning

Parents are invited to share any new information to guide the practitioner's assessment of their child and share celebrations from home through email.

At the end of a child's time in the Foundation stage

The final Early Years Foundation Stage profile scores are sent to the Local Authority. A report is sent home at the end of the year which includes an opportunity for parental feedback. An open afternoon is held at the end of the year. This is an opportunity for parents to look at their child's work and discuss the end of year report if necessary.

Information about a child's Characteristics of Learning is shared with parents and also Year 1 staff.

Parental Involvement

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school.
- Arranging, where possible, visits by the teacher to all children in their home setting and childcare provision prior to their starting school.
- Providing a pack of information about starting school or nursery.

- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Inviting children to spend time in school or nursery during induction visits.
- Providing an induction meeting for parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss nursery and school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
 - Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year (October) to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through online communication systems, weekly newsletters, notice boards and school newsletters.
- Sending home 'celebrations' and 'wow' moments from school through online APP, all designed to enable parents to celebrate outstanding achievements.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in the Foundation Stage.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, stay and plays, whole school events, productions and sports day.

- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers.

- Home learning is sent home for children to engage in with parents. Parents are encouraged to send this in via email or bring it into school .

Parents can offer support to their child in a variety of ways such as:

- Providing opportunities to share books at home
- Supporting their child when completing any home learning tasks
- Talking to their child about their day and the activities they have been doing

The School Nurse, Speech Therapist and Educational Psychologist can be called upon to offer advice if needed.

Links with the Community and other Agencies

The Local Community

We use the opportunities offered by the local community in the following ways:

- Visiting local parks, shops and other attractions
- Visiting local museums

- Inviting people in the locality who come to talk to the children (Police, Fire-Fighters, Nurses, local charities etc.)

- Involving local interest groups such as the church, women's groups, local historians, hobbies, experts
- Links with local Residential and Nursing Homes

Professional and Local Services

We have links with the following services:

- Educational Psychological Service
- School Nurses and Health Visitors
- Local Children's Centre - Seedlings
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Education Welfare Officers
- Social Services
- Paediatric and other Hospital Outreach
- EMASS

Links with local schools and with other settings catering for Early Years

We have links with local schools and other providers of education for Early Years. These include:

- Schools within the IfTL Multi Academy Trust
- Other local schools
- Nurseries, playgroups and pre-schools
- Child-minders

Equal opportunities

The school has an equal opportunities statement applying to all areas of the curriculum. The EYFS curriculum is:

- Open to all pupils irrespective of their attainment or aptitude
- Fair, unbiased in terms of gender, ethnic or cultural background of pupil
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Encouraging and enabling with regard to pupils with special educational needs

Health and Safety

The Foundation teachers are responsible for liaising with the Health and Safety Co-ordinator to ensure that safety and welfare requirements are met. The Foundation Co-ordinator will also liaise with the Health and Safety Co-ordinator to make sure that safety and legal requirements are met in the installation and use of all Foundation Stage equipment and resources.

Policy Review

The Foundation Stage policy will be reviewed annually to reflect changing needs, progress and practice. The Policy is to be used alongside whole school policies with particular reference to the Foundation Stage.

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- School prospectus
- School admissions policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Statements on racism and bullying
- Equal opportunities policy
- Complaints procedure
- Behaviour policy
- Statement on the curriculum for EYFS, Key Stages 1 and 2