



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Reviewed: Nov 2017

Next review: Nov 2019

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body

..... *Mrs Karen Walker*

Purpose

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At West Tytherley CE Primary School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. This document outlines the aims, principles, practices and provision of early years teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage (Year R) at West Tytherley CE Primary School.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes 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." (DFE, 2012). The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year.

Admissions

At West Tytherley, children who have turned four by the 1st September of that school year are offered a full-time place in our reception class, with fifteen places available each year. Our reception children benefit from a full-time teacher and a full-time teaching assistant.

Aims

At West Tytherley, we aim to:

- give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and fearless lifelong learners.
- encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere
- support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing
- help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals
- enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually
- offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences
- give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences.
- ensure that all children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the expected knowledge and skills

The Curriculum

The Reception class follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available on the school website or to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. This clearly defines what we teach.

The EYFS Principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships

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

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development

Our foundation stage has one classroom, a mezzanine floor and a large outdoor classroom. All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of three *prime area of learning*:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and Language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)

There are four *specific areas of learning*:

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

Planning

At West Tytherley, all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the foundation stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a half termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

Learning through Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt,

negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the 'characteristics of effective teaching and learning' and the reception teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.

We will provide:

- a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced.

We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs

co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies (such as, the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others). We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Observation & Assessment

Throughout reception, children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. We use Tapestry, an online learning journal, to record our observations of children and keep samples of their work.

In the Autumn term, usually within the first 6 weeks of school, children are assessed against learning statements in maths, literacy and PSED to determine a 'baseline', or starting point, for their future learning. Judgements will be based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play. There will not be any form of testing and parent's views on their child as a learner will be taken into account.

Currently the statutory reporting of the Foundation Stage Profile is carried out at the end of reception, where assessment of children's achievements in all areas of learning is undertaken. Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum.

We track our children's knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the foundation stage and a final assessment against the ELG's is made at the end of reception. This final assessment at the end of foundation stage helps to identify each child's achievement and learning profile in preparation for their transition to key stage one. This assessment is reported formally both to parents and the DFE. In addition to this, at the end of EYFS, classteachers provide a written summative report against the Early Learning Goals for parents.

Transition & Induction

At West Tytherley, we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end, we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

As part of the induction process, our reception staff hold a meeting in the summer term before the children start school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child – both before school, starting school and during the reception year.

Our staff also arrange to meet all parents in their home setting (prior to their child starting school) and this gives children the security of meeting with their teachers in a safe, familiar environment. It also gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child.

In the summer term, children who are joining reception, have the opportunity to meet with their teachers in their classroom on four occasions. This helps to support children and prepare them what school is all about.

In addition to this, our school staff liaise closely with the relevant feeder nursery settings to carry out a 'transition meeting', where important information is communicated about every individual child – helping staff to gather an accurate and helpful picture of each child prior to starting school. Transfer records from pre-school settings are given to inform reception practitioners about the new intake. Where possible, visits to other local pre-school settings are made in order to aid the induction process further.

Starting School

At the beginning of the school year new reception children are given a 7 day settling in period to ensure that children have the time to become secure and familiar with the new routines before starting school full time. For the first 5 days (usually a complete week), children attend school in the mornings only and for first two days of the second week, children attend for mornings and then stay for lunch. After this, most children are ready to attend school full time, however, we will work with any parent who feels that a different approach may be necessary.

Moving into Year 1

At the end of reception, children have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers in their classrooms on several occasions prior to starting Year One. At the end of each school year, teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

During children's time in reception a range of activities are planned for all classes to help develop children's confidence in working with other pupils and staff and in

different locations in and around the school. Reception children also make regular use of the whole school facilities, such as the village hall, dining hall, ICT suite, library and playing field for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Reception visit days, we enable parents to come in as they drop their children off in the mornings – this helps to share their child's learning environment, have time to talk informally with the practitioners and to meet other parents. We also offers parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers. They are also able to contribute to their child's learning journal using the online 'Tapestry' programme. This information helps to build a well-rounded picture of the child in for everyone.

Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey. All parents are invited to join in with trips outside school and to join in with a range of activities from supporting phonics activities to sports day inside school. In reception parents are encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records, simple homework activities and by sharing assemblies and whole class activities.

At West Tytherley, we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. Formal parents meeting are offered termly, where parents have the opportunity of speaking with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their child's learning journals. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day.

Health & safety and Safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

In Beech class, the children have access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene & hand washing techniques throughout the

year. We plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

Linked Policies

This policy will contribute to the review and revision of related school policies, e.g.

- School Improvement Plan
- SEN Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Learning & Teaching Policy
- Assessment Policy