

The Woodlands Community Primary School
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

"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".

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us, part time, at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Most children begin attending school full time after two weeks. On rare occasions those who are not ready after the initial two weeks, through discussion with parents, have an individualized plan which supports the children, by gradually phasing them into full time education.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

At The Woodlands Community Primary School 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/ Wow assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of individual needs and 'differences'. All children at The Woodlands Community Primary are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. 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.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that 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;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices 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 children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

Welfare

"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."

At The Woodlands Community Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

We understand that we are required to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- promote the good health of the children ,take necessary steps to prevent the spread on infection, and take appropriate action when they are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs.

- Ensure all staff understand their safeguarding policy and are trained to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and act quickly and appropriately.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Have at least one person with a paediatric first aid certificate available at all times when children are on the premises.
- Ensure Staffing arrangements are organised to ensure safety and to meet the needs of the children.
- Ensure that the outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys, must be safe and suitable for their purpose.
- Plan and organise our systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures for the safe and efficient management of the settings and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

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

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents before their child starts in our school;
- the EYFS staff visit children in their pre-school setting prior to their starting school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teachers before starting school during 'Stay and Play afternoons';
- inviting all parents and children to three induction meetings during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class and allowing free access to the children's 'learning journeys';
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the summer term;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Class assemblies, Sports Day, coffee mornings, parent workshops etc;
- providing space in the children's 'learning journeys' for parents to leave comments and contribute observations relating to the children's achievements.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

At our school the EYFS teachers acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

We have good links over 15 different pre-school providers. Annual visits are undertaken by the EYFS teachers. The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss new intake children and observe them within their setting.

Enabling Environments

At The Woodlands Community Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS follows the schools' Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans (MTP's), based upon development matters, organised into ½ termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these MTP's in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. Staff plan activities and experiences that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff initially are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

At The Woodlands, staff contextualise learning experiences through half termly themes or topics which centre around the use of rich class texts and are supported by the children's own interests. Themes include Magnificent Me, It's a Kind of Magic, Celebrating Change, Do you know?, Commotion in the Ocean, and Does chocolate grow on trees? These themes provide a broad and balanced curriculum and draw enrichment from the Commando Joes; pupil voice, WOLF days, and LEAP into Learning. Children have daily Phonics, White Rose Maths and Story sessions which enable them to rehearse and secure the skills needed by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, prior to joining Key Stage 1.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

At The Woodlands great importance is placed on language development, phonic acquisition and reading and our teaching is supported by Twinkl phonics an OFSTED and DfE validated scheme. We celebrate text rich learning environments and promote reading for pleasure from day 1 both at school and at home.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded using tapestry to create children's individual 'learning journey' booklet. They also contain the views of the children and information provided by parents. At The Woodlands Community Primary School, we use the development matters and characteristics of effective learning to record judgements against the EYFS Profile. Within the first 6 weeks that a child joins the Reception class, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). At the end of the EYFS (end of the Reception year), staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

Staff plan a thorough and effective induction program for both children and their parents/carers before they start school, including activities such as a Teddy bear picnic, stay and play sessions, parent workshops, pre-school visits and a welcome evening. Working together with preschools and parents prior to starting greatly aids a smooth transition, a philosophy and practise which is replicated as our Reception children move to Year 1.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is 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 classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has its own enclosed outdoor area. This 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 to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Learning and Development

At The Woodlands Community Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

3 Prime areas

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

4 *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

- Literacy
- Mathematical Development
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Head teacher and EYFS leader will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Signed

C Laffan
2023