



# Whitley Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

**Article 29** (goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect

**March 2023**

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statement of Practice

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Whitley Village School, children join the mixed Reception and Year 1 class in the September of the academic year they turn 5. This means that they will have 3 terms of EYFS.

In partnership with parents/carers, we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. We endeavour to ensure that children have: “the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop well and are kept healthy and safe.” Our three provisions provide learning through teaching and experiences that give all pupils a: “broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021)

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- 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.
- 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).

### 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 frequent specific and descriptive praise and encouragement, as well as celebrations and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. Staff use strategies from SSTEW (Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing) and ECERs (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) to make sure that their interactions support and extend language and communication so that children are encouraged to talk and actively listen, turn take and collaborate with others.

### Inclusion/Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Children and their families are valued at Whitley Village School. Children are treated as individuals and we strive to offer access to all provision 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 special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Most referrals are made quickly so that advice from specialists can be used to personalise and tailor the curriculum for individual pupils as early as possible. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and consent is gained prior to any referral.

### We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Providing a trauma informed approach, so that children can find ways to manage their emotions and feelings and maintain the capacity to learn, despite difficult events that may occur. The well-being of all is of the highest priority.
- Creating an environment of safety, connection and compassion in which the contributions of all children are valued.
- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experiences 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.
- Using diverse resources, which are thoughtfully and sensitively added and planned for, as permanent features in our continuous provision. These resources reflect our ‘Rights Respecting Schools’ and ‘No Outsiders’ approach 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.

## **Welfare**

It is important to us that all children in Whitley Village school are safe. We aim to educate children about 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 our children.

“A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundations children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2014)

## **Positive Relationships**

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

## **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that *parents and carers* are a child's first and most enduring educators and we welcome and value the contribution they make. We recognise and value this through:

- Inviting parents and carers into school on a fortnightly basis to engage in early phonics, reading, writing and maths activities. Parents are invited to look at learning journeys and contribute towards their child's learning.
- An information meeting for parents is held in the June prior to starting. Here they receive the Reception Information booklet, School Readiness information, Wrap-around Care information and information on Home Visits.
- Asking parents to complete an admissions form, a medical form and to inform us of their child's likes, dislikes and any concerns they may have.
- Asking parents to sign permission slips for local visits out of school, photographs of their child for assessment purposes and social media purposes as well as using the internet at school.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Ensuring children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transition sessions and home visits. At Whitley we see transition as a process - not an event.
- There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Reception school year.
- Parents are invited into school for our weekly celebration assembly.
- We pride ourselves on having outstanding relationships with parents, carers and other parties. We have an 'open door' policy whereby we have daily discussions with parents regarding their children and actively encourage parents to take part in their child's learning experiences. Parents inform staff regularly of WOW moments at home which are then recorded into Learning Journeys. Both parent and child voice are valued.

## **Enabling Environments**

Using advice from ECERs-E, our School Improvement Partner and the Local Authority have supported us in critically evaluating our provisions and practises. Outcomes from these assessments have enabled us 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 organised into discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. The continuous provision is enhanced according to 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. Play-based learning plays an important part of the EYFS curriculum. Children direct their own learning through access to the continuous provision and enhanced opportunities provided by staff. Staff carefully consider children's interests whilst maintaining narrative immersion. They will enhance play and extend as needed to further individualise learning and support their concept development and higher order-thinking, as suggested by the SSTEW document.

## **Learning and Development**

Teachers and Early Years Practitioners provide the curriculum in Reception for a maximum of 13 children.

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are “prime areas,” and four “specific areas.”

### **The prime areas are**

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

### The specific areas are

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World and
- Expressive Arts and Design

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents 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 and/or carers and agree how to support the child.

At Whitley Village School: "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." At our school, the balance between adult led and child-initiated activities is dependent on the children and the needs of the individuals. Teachers and Teaching Assistants ensure that this still complies with the EYFS Statutory Guidance. Play is used as an essential part children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and activities which are guided or encouraged by adults. No specific approach is prescribed in the Statutory Framework. "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 on the different ways that children learn. At Whitley Village 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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2021)

At Whitley Village School we use Development Matters as a way of tracking children's attainment and progress in the 17 areas of learning. Within the final term of EYFS the Profile is used to assess all children against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Throughout the year the class teachers use their assessments and those provided by Teaching Assistants to plan the week and the weekly activities. Planning is done on a weekly and daily basis and covers all specific areas of learning whether this is through the continuous provision or adult led activities. Planning is based on children's interests, observations and assessments, and gaps in development. In the EYFS at Whitley Village, continuous assessment is taking place. Observations of the child are made through photographs, post its and ipads. Each child has their own Learning Journey which is safe and shared with parents / carers regularly throughout the year. Next steps are recorded in Learning Journey's to extend and steer children towards new learning. The following code is used:

- Next Step** → New learning is recorded after the arrow
- Ev → NS** This highlights that there is evidence towards the next step
- NSA** This code indicates that the next step has been achieved

### 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.

### Health and Safety

- Fresh drinking water and fruit is available at all times.
- Children's' dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- Milk is available during snack times.
- Children bring in a morning snack from home.
- A first aider is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept.

- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy is in place.

### **The Learning Environment**

The EYFS setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or take things more quietly. The classroom covers all learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Reception have their own outdoor area and access to the larger school playground. 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 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 in all areas of learning.

### **Transition**

#### **From Home to School**

On receiving the details of our September intake, prior to a child's entry into Reception, the following arrangements are in place:

- Home visits prior to pupils joining school. The class teacher visits the family home to meet and observe every child in an environment that is comfortable and familiar to them, staff talk to their parents/carers and share information that will support the child's transition. Parents are provided with the opportunity to share any concerns or anxieties around starting school.
- Parents are invited into school to attend a 'Starting Reception' presentation. School routines, uniform, expectations and the EYFS curriculum and assessment are explained. Parents are given the opportunity to ask questions and are given a tour of the Reception classroom.
- Children are invited to 5 settling in sessions. The first is for an hour where they stay with their parent / carer. The remaining settling in sessions are for the full afternoon. The last 2 sessions are shared with the children who will be in the Year 1 side of the class. Families are invited to come to lunch on the final visit.
- We have strong links with our local Pre-School. We regularly attend shared events. The class teacher meets with the Pre-School manager during the summer term to discuss children's current learning and attainment. This can be done earlier for some children if it is needed.

#### **From Reception Class to Key Stage 1**

Transition will start during the Summer Term, in which more adult led activities will be planned. Children will stay in the same class when they move to Year 1.

### **Leadership and Management**

EYFS staff keep well-informed with any changes and attend all local authority training. The class teacher monitors all areas of EYFS.

Priorities relating to the EYFS will be identified in the school development plan as appropriate and a detailed action plan is used as a working document to constantly improve standards.

It is expected that all staff and governors are aware of the requirements of the Foundation Stage and the importance of the key stage in relation to the children's learning and its impact on raising standards across the school.