

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY



Introduction

At Whitchurch Combined School we aim to ensure that the experiences the children have in the Reception class, enable development of the whole child through holistic and interactive curriculum. The Foundation Stage underpins a child's educational development and therefore our teaching will reflect equal access to all areas of learning for all children irrespective of gender, race or social background. The children will experience a range and balance of child initiated, adult initiated and adult led activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Legislation:

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#) and subsequent updates inclusive of 1st September 2025.

Admissions

Children enter school at the beginning of the Autumn term during the year in which they will become 5. The intake is staggered, with all children admitted after five days.

Intent:

At Whitchurch we aim to provide motivating first-hand experiences to enable children to learn more and remember more. We also encourage children to build resilience, ambition and a lifelong love of learning whilst also learning how to look after their own mental health and wellbeing. We aim to build on the wealth of knowledge children already have and are actively developing relationships with feeder settings through our Early Years Hub. Our intent is to take into consideration the pupils' starting points and needs as they begin their learning journey.

Every child has access to a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which prepares them for now and for the future in terms of opportunities and experiences. We aim to work collaboratively with parents and carers to encourage independent, enthusiastic learners who thrive and reach their full potential. It is our intent that children who enter our EYFS begin their lifelong learning journey by developing physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst also embedding a positive attitude to school and a love of learning.

We recognise that all children are unique, celebrating and welcoming differences within our school community. Therefore, our curriculum is developed and adapted each year to follow the interests and fascinations of the children in the current year group whilst also building specific knowledge, identified through the areas of learning. We recognise how learning builds sequentially – by building knowledge, skills and learning behaviours from what the children already know and can do towards identified end points or outcomes.

Our curriculum design will ensure they are ready for the transition to Year 1. We embed a language of learning based on the characteristics of effective learning. Our whole school approach, enables children to understand and talk about their learning experiences.

We aim to:

- Provide a curriculum that offers children a wide range of opportunities ensuring that we do not expect children to aspire to things they have never encountered.
- We will work on broadening children's experiences providing opportunities to try new things and encouraging them to relish a new challenge
- Provide high expectations encouraging them to develop perseverance and self-belief so that they can problem solve and achieve far more than they expected

- Provide a learning environment that helps children achieve their potential and support those who need additional help in order to maximise their chances of achieving the Early Learning Goals
- Provide children opportunities to develop their sense of wellbeing and ability to regulate their feelings so that they feel confident in our community and are equipped with all the tools they need to transition to Year 1 effectively
- Continue to develop the skills and expertise of staff working in EYFS through regular and comprehensive professional development either run by the EYFS Lead or attending courses run by other providers.
- Provide a weekly opportunity for the EYFS team to come together to have a shared dialogue regarding the children and provision. Through this; enhancements can be devised, areas of learning highlighted, strengths and areas for improvement, focuses and challenges can be discussed.

Implementation

Our curriculum follows the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early years Foundation Stage and uses the Development Matters 2022 documents as a basis. These documents specify the requirements for learning and development in the EYFS. We have used these to develop our curriculum offer to ensure that we deliver a carefully planned and progressive curriculum.

Through our knowledge of each child and formative assessments the EYFS team plan exciting and engaging activities that will move the children's learning forward and give them a context for their learning. This may involve following a class theme where we take advantage of cross curricular links and may also include following individual children's interests at specific times during the daily offer.

The curriculum is designed to include a blend of whole class, guided, adult directed play and child-initiated learning activities to ensure children are taught the knowledge they need for cumulative gains in learning in a progressive manner as well as following their own interests. We look forward at the start of a year to assessing what our children know and understand and ensure all children systematically develop knowledge in all seven areas of the curriculum.

Children in EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active and thinking critically and creatively and this takes place both indoors and in our outdoor area. Our outdoor area is open all year round and in all but the most challenging weather conditions. Children make their own decisions about where they learn best to apply taught knowledge. The Early Years Curriculum is also carefully devised to ensure that the children are introduced to key concepts and bodies of knowledge that they will revisit in key stage 1 and key stage 2.

The school follows the Lesley Clarke Synthetic Phonics, DFE validated systematic, synthetic phonics scheme from their early days in school. Through this all children learn to read and write with accuracy, fluency and automaticity. The scheme offers a structure for the children to learn letter formation and transcription. The scheme provides support for parents.

Staff are trained and monitored regularly to ensure a consistent and successful approach. Children read daily in class and the books are matched specifically to the phonic phase they are learning, ensuring they are able to read independently. We provide effective and focused intervention for those children who are finding learning challenging and are not on track to meet national expectations at the end of the year to enable them to catch up quickly with their peers. This is provided in an inclusive and flexible manner depending on the needs of the individual children.

Support from parents is also enlisted at an early stage to ensure that the children have every chance to achieve the Early Learning Goals. A range of formative and summative assessments are used to identify what children know and understand and to precisely target their next steps in learning. The EYFS team collect evidence of children's learning through shared dialogue meetings, photos and some physical evidence. It is through a consistent and valuable shared dialogue where we know the children completely.

Learning is shared through class dojo so that parents can engage, enjoy and celebrate learning. Opportunities to support children's learning is also shared on class dojo for parents. This means that

parents can engage with children regularly about their learning and can contribute to the knowledge we have of the child in school. From January, a home learning book is sent home, with suggested activities for children to complete at home. This book is expected to come back to school at the end of term.

The judgements of our school are moderated with other schools and the EYFS Coordinator partakes in moderating sessions in local EYFS groups. This means judgements are secure and consistent with government guidelines.

We love to provide children with contextual, first-hand opportunities that lots of them have not experienced before or that enhance their learning in school. We go on visits to support this for example a trip to a museum which is not local to them to handle live minibeasts and a virtual reality space visit. We ensure that all of our visits are learning related and will provide the spark for further immersion in a theme or project.

The teaching and pedagogy are reviewed and evaluated regularly through weekly team meetings in Reception. These have an agenda and actions which are then reviewed in the following meeting. We ensure that the areas we discuss and develop are reflected in changes and developments in our classroom practice.

By the end of the year, we provide opportunities for children to increase their ability to work independently on tasks ensuring they are well prepared for the move to Year 1. We also ensure that the curriculum and pedagogy in Year 1 continues to reflect the independent learning skills children have gained in Reception working together as teams to develop expertise and confidence in all teaching staff. We do this through key stage meetings where reflections on practice are made, evaluated and decisions about the best way to move forward to enhance children's learning.

The team in Reception work tirelessly to ensure that children are surrounded by a kind, caring and happy environment which helps them develop their own personalities in their journey through school. It is a positive place to be where resilience, perseverance and successes are celebrated and every child feels valued and respected.

Impact

The impact of the EYFS curriculum is reflected in having well rounded, happy and confident children. The children transition into Year 1 with key knowledge and overarching concepts to enable them to access the requirements of the National Curriculum. Our children are often amazing role models for others in school.

Our children consistently meet or exceed the National and Local Authority data for children achieving a Good Level of Development. Our children reach our endpoints identified through our carefully planned curriculum offer for all seven areas of learning. The teaching and pedagogy are reviewed and evaluated regularly through weekly team meetings in Reception. These have an agenda and actions which are then reviewed in the following meeting. We ensure that the areas we discuss and develop are reflected in changes and developments in our classroom practice.

The Early Years provision features in all areas of the School Development Plan and has a rigorous plan for development each year. This is monitored and evaluated by the EYFS Lead, the Head teacher and designated governor Jo Brant. This ensures that all staff understand the Early Years curriculum offer and how it provides the foundation for subsequent learning for all subjects of the National Curriculum.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

Nursery/Preschool Visits and Transition in EYFS

- Prior to any child being welcomed into our setting the first point of contact will be made with children during Nursery/Preschool visits and the first point of contact with parents is via a welcome evening in June
- In liaison with parents and nursery/preschool settings, if we feel a home visit is need or more suitable, we will carry one out.
- "Stay and Play" opportunities are provided for parents to come with their child to the school. Not only to get to know the parent and child, but additionally to explain routines, times etc. and to answer any questions that may be asked of the setting. They will enable staff to interact with the child and provide him/her with a reference point for the formal start of school. Meetings will give an opportunity for both parents and school to discuss mutual expectations or support that may be offered.
- Across EYFS the individual needs of a child are always key for a successful transition. Working with parents/carers and other professional bodies we may adjust transition to further meet the needs of the individual child.
- Transition into Year 1 starts with having joint class projects and visits to the Year 1 classroom. EYFS and Year 1 teacher meet to discuss each child and transition days are set.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount, daily risk assessments are completed by a member of EYFS staff. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risk.

We adhere to the school policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. Outside agencies are actively encouraged to support the health and welfare of the children in EYFS.

Please see safer recruitment, safeguarding and absence policies for further information.

Safer Eating

Encouraging safer eating practises is paramount. We will always have a full paediatric first aid (PFA) trained member of staff supervising children whilst eating within sight and hearing distance, including at lunchtimes.

We follow the [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition - GOV.UK](#) guidance to ensure the children are encourages to eat a balanced diet covering the 4 main food groups, avoid foods and drinks high in salt, sugar and saturated fat, milk and water are the only drinks we offer and children should eat a variety of fruit and vegetables to access different vitamins and nutrients. We do this by providing fruit for a snack in the morning and Fresh Start Catering company provide a balanced and portioned controlled lunch. We also send home healthy eating information to parents. Please see the Food and Nutrition Policy for more detail.

Assessment

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place during shared dialogue meetings, good examples of independent learning is kept and filed. Summative assessments are based on knowledge and expert professional judgement. Significant observations are shared on class dojo.

Regular more formal assessments are carried out and results are filed. Summative Data to record progress against the statements (C&L; PD; PSED; L; M; UtW; EA&D) is collected and collated on to Sonar three times a year.

Evidence for the baseline is gathered from regular observational assessments and activities set up specifically to assess children's knowledge and skills. Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) also.

At the end of their Reception year (June) the Foundation Stage assessment is completed using evidence gathered over the year. These results are then formally passed on to the Local Authority for analysis.

The results will also be passed onto the Year 1 teacher to enable them to plan for progression.

Planning

- Activities and experiences are planned for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively.
- Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. 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.
- In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.
- A core text supports children's learning, using "The Power of Reading" resources.
- Planning is sequential and a curriculum map provides a yearly overview and ensures all areas of learning are covered.
- Medium term plans set the learning intentions for the half term and cover all areas of learning.
- Lesley Clarke's Synthetic Phonics is delivered daily, alongside White Rose maths sessions. PE session are delivered using "REAL PE".

Partnership with Parents

Before entering the school, parents will meet with the class teacher and headteacher in an evening session to welcome them to the school; explain procedures and answer any questions.

Parents are encouraged to sign up to and use class dojo, anything which is relevant to the child and his/her needs. Regular photos are shared, messages of encouragement or support offered and celebrations occur on here.

Parents from other year groups are welcome to come and help in the class with readers or group work under the directions of the teacher. We offer sharing afternoons including an Easter Crafternoon and Minibeast madness!

There are opportunities each term at parents' evenings, for a more formal feedback session on the child's general progress in school. Parents are welcome to see the class teacher at any mutually convenient time. This is in line with our 'open door' policy.

Termly newsletters go out to parents informing them of topics to be covered that term and general information about the class and organisation.

Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access to the curriculum regardless of gender, ethnicity or disability.

Areas of the curriculum are planned to cover celebrations of many different faiths. Children with EAL are given extra support and language opportunities within the daily classroom routine.

Special Education Needs

Children's previous education settings are contacted when the child receives their school place. At this point, we ask for information about any children with known SEN, so we can make transition as smooth as possible. Children are also assessed within the first half term of entering school. Those who perform below the average level will be monitored closely during their first few weeks to observe progression and achievements. Where a child is found to have a specific educational, social or developmental need, the SEN co-ordinator will be brought in to assess more specific areas of need. This will then develop into a provision map to support their learning.

At all stages parents will be kept informed and encouraged to support with activities carried out at home.

Children, regardless of any Special Education Need, will maintain access to all areas of the curriculum.

Once the individual special education needs of a child have been identified they can be addressed in accordance with the school's SEN policy. Where necessary, outside agencies may be consulted.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will ensure standards are maintained and further improvements made as necessary by identifying children's strengths and areas for development. This will involve evaluation of their standards of achievement, their responses to the curriculum, the effective management of resources and the quality of teaching and leadership.

Date reviewed: September 2025

Date for review: September 2026