Whitegate End Primary School and Nursery

EYFS Policy

Responsible Committee	
Date ratified	May 2026
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Signed on behalf of the governing body	
Print name	

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Whitegate End Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults. In the policy the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at Whitegate End Primary School. This is available to children who begin school the academic term after they turn three years old for Nursery and the September following turning four years old for Reception. In the policy the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

Teaching in the EYFS setting at Whitegate End Primary School is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2021). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes:
'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Learning and Development'.

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:
1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

EYFS settings will support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:
1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value. At Whitegate End Primary School, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

Active Learning through Play

At Whitegate End Primary School, we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play. We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at Whitegate End Primary School practitioners provide a balance of both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding. Six weekly challenges, known to the children as 'Rainbow Challenges', are planned for as part of the observation cycle. Children access and complete the challenges within the provision, at a level suitable to them, independently. Weekly enhancements to provision are also planned for. Challenges and enhancements are designed to plug assessment gaps, extend play ideas demonstrated by the children the previous week and follow the interests of the children.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play-based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities across the day. Although some of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured teaching sessions and adult led activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc… Reading plays an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure

there is always time for a whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child in Reception is expected to have a school book bag which can be purchased from the school office. Nursery children are provided with plastic wallets for books. Time is dedicated to sharing books in both Nursery and Reception whether it be in a group, with peers, with an adult or as a whole class.

Characteristics of Learning

At Whitegate End 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)

We ensure the children also understand what it means to be an effective learner through the use of 'The Learning Dinosaurs'. There are six dinosaurs, each represent a different characteristic of effective learning. The children are identified and celebrated when they demonstrate the skills of one of the dinosaurs.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at Whitegate End Primary School. The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. Observations of individual children are planned for and take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Spontaneous observations are also made in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. All practitioners are involved in observing children. They use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified, and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2021). This is updated at least once per half term to track individual progress. At the end of the year, it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. The statutory baseline assessment is carried out during the children's first six weeks upon entering the Reception. Judgments made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development for both Nursery and Reception children.

Planning

The curriculum is carefully planned for and sequenced in accordance with what we know about early childhood development. The Characteristics of Effective learning (CoEL) are a high priority and are introduced through the Learning Dinosaurs; Explorosaurus, Solvosaurus Rex, Pretendactyl, Pridosaur and Tryceratops. During the first half term children learn to identify the qualities of each dinosaur and adults spend much of their time within the provision; building relationships, nurturing friendships, modelling play and good communication skills, and promoting independence within the setting. The Rainbow Challenges are initially used as a tool for embedding the CoEL. There are six challenges set each week, five of which the children have to seek out and complete within the indoor and outdoor provision and one is adult led. During the second half term the provision-based Rainbow Challenges are linked closely to the Learning Dinosaurs and give the children the opportunity to put the characteristics of effective learning (CoEL) into practice. The environment remains a priority although adults begin to deliver objective led activities as expectations of the children's independence grow. Once the children are demonstrating a willingness to try to new things, are not afraid of failure, are able to explore solutions to their problems and show pride in their achievements The Rainbow Challenges shift focus to an observational approach. Each challenge is planned from collected observations of the children which highlight specific interests or ideas, misconceptions and needs within the setting. We aim to ensure each child 'inspires' at least one challenge each term. When the children have become masters of the indoor and outdoor provision, adults in all areas of the unit will deliver objective led activities which include mark making and writing, a high-quality text focus, maths and a 'Wonder'. 'Wonders' come from an exploration of a range of non-fiction texts where children share any questions or 'wonders' that arise. Each week a child's wonder will be explored through an adult led activity. Basic provision is the open-ended resources in which we provide a foundation for play. Basic provision is changed at the end of each term and is enhanced with planned play-ideas, weekly, based on observations of the children. The learning through play approach that is embedded into the WGE curriculum, across all year groups, is based upon the 4 stages of conscience competence (see appendix 1) and is designed to give children the opportunity to practise resilience. At WGE we ensure that children are given opportunities to retrieve their knowledge from past learning and is build into everyday practise.

Parents as Partners

At Whitegate End Primary School, we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavor to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents. We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through questionnaires, WOW sheets and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through half termly letters and reports, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

In addition to termly newsletters and reports, parents are kept up to date through the school's website which is regularly updates. There are also opportunities to share children's learning with parents in celebration assemblies. Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another parent's evening takes place during the spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress. Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include sharing adventure books, structured conversations, end of year reports and Celebration assemblies where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where children show them their work and special events for Mother's and Father's Days. The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss and concerns they might have. Parents are also invited to workshops and family learning sessions where they are able to learn about how we teach phonics, reading, writing and maths and how they can help their child at home.

Admissions and Induction

Whitegate End Primary School provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year and full time and part time places for children in Nursery dependent upon the number of applicants, details of this can be found in our Nursery Admissions Policy on the school website.

Before children start in the setting, they are offered a series of visits during the summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment.

In the summer term parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. 'All About Me' induction packs will also be given out to parents as another way to support practitioners' knowledge and understanding of each individual child. Home visits are also conducted in the Summer Term where two members of the Early Years team visit the child and their family at home. Where this is not possible a visit to the child's daycare setting is arranged.

From September, Reception and full-time Nursery children attend the setting full-time. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy this is achieved by providing opportunities for pupils to visit the school setting and be involved during the borough transfer day. The Early Years staff make every effort to seek information for pupils who have already attended other Nurseries or private settings. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. stablished routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.
See Admissions Policy for more information.

Equal Opportunities

All practitioners at Whitegate End Primary School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at Whitegate End Primary School.
See Equality Policy for more information.

Special Educational Needs

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. We endeavour to ensure that children "learn and develop well and kept healthy and safe." We aim to support children in their learning through using "the best available evidence on how children learn and reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge and attitudes children need as foundations for good future progress." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021)

Welfare and Safeguarding

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. In EYFS we follow the procedures set out in the school Safeguarding, Child Protection, Teaching and Learning, Intimate Care and Security policies.

Behaviour Management

Consequences

- Speak to child about right and wrong choices and then take child to another area to re-direct play and encourage co-operative play and sharing.
- Pupils aim to achieve their Always badge. This can be achieved quickly by following the school's Always promises consistently.
- Remove child from room for a period of reflection (up to 5 minutes).
- Recurring problems to be tackled in partnership with the parents.

Reward Systems

- Praise children for good choices.
- Once a child has been seen to follow the Always promises consistently, they will receive their Always badge.
- Children receive DoJo's for making the right choices, with certificates given for specific number of DoJo's
- An Always child is selected each week to take Tatty Teddy home and record their adventures together in his dairy which is shared with the class the following week
- Pupil of the week award for the whole school assembly for the children who have impressed the teachers in EYFS during the week.
- Six children per week are awarded one of the Learning Dinosaurs for demonstrating characteristics of effective learning
- Children who have completed all of the Rainbow Challenges each week are presented with a reward card and are entered into a draw to win a prize

Forest School

Forest School offers the children an alternative, outdoor learning environment to the classroom. At Whitegate End Forest School sessions take place weekly within the grounds of the Early Years Foundation Stage. These sessions offer the children a unique opportunity in which they can develop skills such as problem solving, teamwork and creativity whilst having fun learning outdoors. It also allows children to try out new things in a 'safe environment'

The children are shown many things during the sessions for example knot tying and shelter building; they are also given the opportunity to explore the outdoor environment. Forest School has many benefits to children. It promotes independence, encourages language and communication development, mathematical development and imagination.

"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."

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the governing body, which receives regular reports on the EYFS from the Headteacher. The policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary.