

# Whitby Heath Primary School

**Excellence in a Caring Environment**



## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy (EYFS)**

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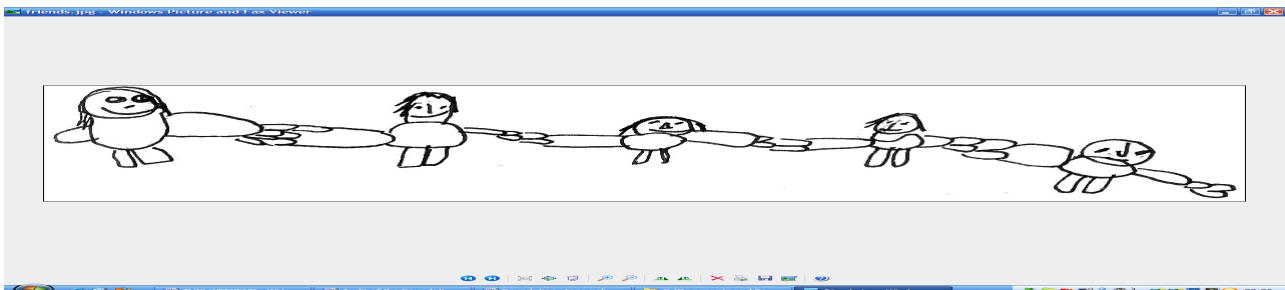
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# Whitby Heath Primary School

## **Section 1 – Our Curriculum**

### **1.1 Introduction**

“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” (EYFS Handbook, 2012).

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception year. Children join Whitby Heath at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

### **1.2 Aims**

Many children starting at Whitby Heath have been to Whitby Heath Preschool. The early years education we offer our children is based on the following aims:

- To build on what our children already know and can do;
- To recognise that every child is different and ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- To provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- To create a rich and stimulating environment;
- To create a partnership between parents and professionals
- To adhere to our school ethos, that our children achieve ‘excellence in a caring community.’
- To ensure all children achieve the five ‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

## **Section 2: Teaching and Learning**

### **2.1 Planning**

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based around four themes:

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

Each theme is linked to an important principle:

#### **A Unique Child**

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. At Whitby Heath, we take onboard children’s different life experiences when planning.

#### **Positive Relationships**

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

#### **Enabling Environments**

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's learning.

#### **Learning and Development**

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Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

The four principles enable teaching and learning to reflect the children's rich and personalised experiences. The curriculum is planned on a week-by-week basis and is often modified as the week progresses, due to responding to the children's interests. Through ongoing observations, we are able to seek out these interests and write PLODs (Possible lines of Development), which plan for additional learning experiences for an individual/group of children. Planning encompasses a balance of child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-led tasks both indoors and outdoors. The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, allows them to develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.

The EYFS 2012 covers 7 areas of learning, which have been split into 'prime' and 'specific' areas and within each there are either 2 or 3 different strands.

### PRIME AREAS

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

### SPECIFIC AREAS

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

The Foundation Stage curriculum reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. These early learning goals establish expectations that most children should reach by the end of the Foundation stage.

## ***2.2 Learning Through Play***

Understanding how children develop and learn affects the way in which we teach. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build on ideas, and learn how to interact socially and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. Play also promotes communication skills as they investigate and solve problems with others. Children learn that they are capable, able to make decisions and solve problems. For active learning, children need:

### **Materials**

Having lots of interesting materials.

### **Manipulation**

Children are free to handle and explore the materials in many different ways.

### **Choice**

Opportunities to make choices about what materials they want to use and how to use them.

### **Language**

To choose their words and express themselves in their own way.

### **Support from adults**

Role of adults to encourage children's efforts, talk with them, join in their play, help them to solve problems and sometimes introduce new activities.

## ***2.3 Assessment and Recording***

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observations and discussions with children.

During the children's first half-term in the reception class, assessments are made of each child's ability using Early Excellence baseline, using observations and adult initiated tasks. Assessment then

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continues throughout the Reception year and recorded on the online 'Learning Journey' on SPTO, post-its, photos, and long observations are also kept in paper form in a traditional learning journey. This creates a detailed record of their achievement. Assessments are made against statements relating to the Early Learning Goals and analysed termly. These online 'Learning Journeys' are used formatively throughout the year to assist planning and target individual needs, and as a summative assessment at the end of the year to report back to parents and to inform the Year 1 teachers.

The term starts with an initial parent/teacher meeting, where both the child and parents attend to discuss any issues and be given advice on homework, reading and any other important information. Parents are informed constantly throughout the year with regards their child's progress and achievements. Parents have passwords to log in to their child's online Learning Journey, teachers and parents talk informally daily and there are two formal parent's evenings each year. The initial meeting takes place during the first half-term in order to discuss how the children have settled in and discuss our early assessments. There is also one in the Spring term with a progress report and individual targets for the children. At the end of the year, parents receive a written report summarising their child's achievements and also receive their child's portfolio of observations.

### **2.4 Inclusion**

In our school all our children are special and 'Every Child Matters.' We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best and to achieve the five major outcomes from the 'Every Child Matters' agenda:

- being healthy;
- staying safe;
- enjoying and achieving;
- making a positive contribution;
- economic well-being.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children; 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;
- Planning activities that take into account children's individual needs;
- 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 learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Planning challenging activities for children who are more able;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. External support agencies are involved as necessary.

### **Section 3 - Health and Safety**

Teachers ensure that all materials and resources are appropriate for the Foundation Stage age group. Risk assessments are in place for the indoor and outdoor learning environments.

### **Section 4 – Involving Parents**

A good partnership between teachers, teaching assistants and parents is vital, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement. We recognise the role parents have played, and their future role in educating their children. We encourage parents to be actively involved in their education while at Whitby Heath, through:

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- Talking to parents about their child before they start school at parent/teacher meetings;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- Record observations to be stuck in the paper Learning Journey.
- Offer a range of activities that support the involvement of parents, e.g. reading practise, baking in school, crafts, stay and play sessions and educational visits.

### Section 5 - Transition into Year 1

We want our children to experience a smooth transition from the Foundation Stage into Key Stage One, so that the pace and quality of learning are maintained to ensure that children continue to make good progress. Therefore, we recognise the importance of making the process of transition between Foundation Stage and Year 1 flexible enough to provide children with time to become secure and develop the emotional well-being and confidence to cope with the changes and new experiences. Transition should be viewed as a process not an event.

Children will have the opportunity in the summer term to access the Year 1 classroom and become familiar with the Year 1 staff. We recognise that the transition may be more stressful for some children, for example, due to specific learning difficulties. Sensitivity in dealing with these children on an individual basis is required. Where necessary, consultation with any outside agencies involved will take place.

Transition Principles:

- *approaches to teaching and learning should be harmonised at the point of transition.*
- During the Summer term Foundation Stage Staff will adopt similar routines and activities to provide the children with early opportunities to experience Year 1 as appropriate. Year 1 Staff will ensure appropriate provision for play-based learning and resources for those children who continue to benefit from opportunities for role play, construction, sand and water and outdoor learning.
- *planning should be based upon assessment information from the EYFSP.*
- The Foundation Stage Profile is an invaluable tool for understanding children's development up to the transition point from the Foundation Stage and can be continued as an assessment tool in Key Stage 1 for those children who have not yet reached the age-related Early Learning Goals. It is intended to inform Key Stage 1 staff and does not require transference of information to National Curriculum levels or P scales.
- *Styles of teaching and learning should meet the needs of the children.*
  - *We believe children should enjoy new approaches at transition.*
  - *We believe transition should motivate and challenge children.*

### Section 6 – Professional Development

Regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage will ensure that staff are in a position to give children the best start to their education at Whitby Heath.

### Section 7 - Conclusion

This policy aims to define Whitby Heath's approach to early education, placing great importance and recognition on this crucial stage in our children's development.