



**WHINSTONE
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
September 2023**

Inspiring Excellence – in learning and life



Vision and Intent

At Whinstone, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) forms the underpinning and overarching framework for learning and development for all children in our care. We intend to enable our children to learn holistically through a combination of access to quality first teaching and through play, experimentation, and exploration while making friends, developing social skills and cultural capital. We aim to ensure that every child has an excellent start to school life, achieving and making progress across each aspect of the EYFS Profile.

Introduction

The EYFS applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year, which in Whinstone Primary School, is our Nursery and Reception cohorts.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Aims and Objectives

At Whinstone Primary School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential.

As outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage':

'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.'

Statutory Framework of EYFS

The Statutory Framework was revised in July 2023. We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/ carers;
- The importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals and beyond.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1. These three areas are the **prime** areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We create Curriculum Overview Plans based on themes across Pre-School and Reception which offer experiences in all seven areas of learning. Plans are merged and blended with child interests.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met.

Children will engage in whole group, small group and individual activities alongside their independent learning.

The curriculum is delivered using both teacher-led and a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: *'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'*.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact when appropriate to stretch and challenge them further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible.

OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

As part of our ongoing practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We primarily record our observations using the online platform Evidence Me, accessing through the app on class iPads. In line with the new Statutory Framework, observations should be purposeful and meaningful without taking staff away from face to face time with children.

When observations are uploaded to children's personal online learning journals, parents/carers receive a notification and they can then view this observation and any related photographs/videos and assessments.

Parents/carers are encouraged to add their own comments and to upload their own observations to show us what their children can do at home.

In Reception we also have writing books, maths books and Read Write Inc books.

These ongoing observations are used to inform the EYFS Profile/Development Matters bands. The children's progress is reviewed continually. Throughout their time in Reception, parents/carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning; both informally through our 'open door' policy and more formally during parent/teacher consultations.

At the end of the year the EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher - who uses the exemplification documents, and their knowledge of the children to make a 'best fit' judgement.

The children are assessed as either emerging or expected in each ELG

Internal moderation takes place alongside moderation within VALT trust and Stockton LA through AMP meetings.

This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help school benchmark and identify improvements.

SAFETY INCLUDING SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE REQUIREMENTS

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Whinstone Primary School. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety.

In Reception we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children.
- Promote good health including oral health.
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately.
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Oral health is promoted through teaching and also daily toothbrushing in classes.

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class iPads are used to photograph children (for Evidence Me observations and assessment purposes)

The EYFS staff hold the Paediatric First aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS and there are dedicated school Safeguarding leads.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals.

We work closely with the parents/carers of our high achieving children to ensure that their individual needs are met and their talents fostered. We ensure that these children are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies. We have a designated SEN/Inclusion Leader in school (A.McNaughton) who supports us with any additional needs a child may have.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

- Holding information evenings before the children start school;
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our introductory sessions;

- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions;
- Inviting them to a parent consultations throughout the year to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning;
- Valuing parents' contributions to learning journeys;
- Inviting parents into school for our 'Come and read sessions' and termly for our 'Stay and Play'
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books;
- Providing curriculum planning overviews highlighting how they can support their child at home;
- Inviting parents into school for 'early reading' meetings/workshops to demonstrate how we teach phonics and help them support their child;
- Providing parents with termly reports and an end of year summary report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile;
- We also draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting to talk about their lives, work and experiences.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Children attend a number of introductory sessions with their parents/carers and independently to gain familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Our Reception staff also visit the local nurseries and preschools in return, to familiarise themselves with the children.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teacher meets with the Year 1 teacher to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data, learning journals and books are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend time towards the end of the school year with their new teacher to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable and are 'next year ready'. Booklets with photos of their new teacher and classroom areas are sent home.

Monitoring of the EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Leader is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Headteacher and Reception team as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults in the Reception team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets.

Appendices:

- Intent, Implementation and Impact Statement
- Link to the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/616222/early-years-foundation-stage-statutory-framework.pdf)

Whinstone Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage

Impact. Implementation and Impact Statements

Intent

At Whinstone, the EYFS forms the underpinning and overarching framework for learning and development for all children in our care. We intend to enable our children to learn holistically through a combination of access to quality first teaching and through play, experimentation, and exploration while making friends, developing social skills and cultural capital. With a key focus on communication and language, early reading skills and developing personal and social skills, we aim to ensure that every child has an excellent start to school life, achieving and making progress across every aspect of the EYFS Profile.

Implementation

In order to implement this, we have created an environment that fosters personal development, reflects British values and the development of self-esteem and self-efficacy to take forward into school and beyond.

Through the use and implementation of our curriculum and continuous provision plans and documents, we ensure that our curriculum offers challenge for all and is able to support children with additional needs, those who are disadvantaged or in a minority group ensuring inclusion for all. Staff value diversity and understand how to apply the EYFS to reflect this, focusing on providing additional and focused support where identified.

Our team plan focusing on all areas of the curriculum and areas identified through the SIP and action plans that need developing and reinforcing. We deliver this through themes over the year and feedback on child interests. We identify individual attainment, progress, gaps in learning and next steps, planning actions in response. We foster positive relationships with parents and carers, with regular feedback to and from the home environment where our parent and child voice is highly valued. We believe that our approach in conjunction with the EYFSP, provides an optimal learning environment that perfectly suits the way our young children learn, play and therefore thrive.

All staff work collaboratively with a shared vision for the continuous provision, documentation and how we care for our children at Whinstone School which is reflected on daily in order to adapt to all eventualities.

Impact

The impact of this will be measured by children achieving expected and beyond expected levels of development and making measured progress from their entry point to leaving Reception. Alongside academic success, we aim for all children to be keen, enthusiastic, inquisitive learners who are capable of developing, fostering and maintaining positive relationships with both adults and children.