

Westhead Lathom St James' CE Primary School



EYFS Policy

Last reviewed: Summer 2024

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Issue	Date	Author/Editor	Revision Notes
1	Summer 2021	Jenna Gardner	Policy reviewed to match the new statutory framework for EYFS 2021.
2	Summer 2022	Helen Clark	Policy reviewed.
3	Summer 2023	Lauren Lyon	Policy reviewed.
4	Summer 2024	Helen Clark	Policy reviewed.

Vision Statement: Our Vision for the Future

'A curriculum that is challenging, inspiring and engaging; in which all pupils flourish spiritually, creatively and academically to become confident young people.'

'With God's power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine.' Ephesians 3:20 New Century Version (NCV)

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of 'The Early Years'.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5 years and is a mixed aged class of Pre-School and Reception children. The class has a full-time Teacher, a full-time Level 3 Teaching Assistant and a part-time Level 2 Teaching Assistant (if required for ratios).

Aims

At Westhead Lathom St James Primary School we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent lifelong learners.

We encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need for their transition to Key Stage One.

The Curriculum

Our Pre-School and Reception curriculum is planned for each cohort ensuring the EYFS statutory framework is adhered to and supported by the Development Matters document and teacher's professional judgements and decisions.

There are four guiding principles which shape practice in our early years settings.

1. That every child is **a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. That children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
3. That 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.
4. That we value the importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates.

The EYFS 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 praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments with teaching and support from adults

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through teaching, supporting and observing children, we are able to capture the children's interests, monitor their stages of development and support their learning needs ensuring that we plan challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning through an enabling indoor and outdoor learning environment.

Learning and development

All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and there are also areas where children can be quiet, reflective and rest.

The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise:

- The seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes
- The early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the reception year
- The assessment requirements (when and how practitioners must assess children's achievements, and when and how they should discuss children's progress with parents and/or carers)

The Areas of Learning

The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The EYFS is made up of three prime area of learning. These three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

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

There are four specific areas of learning which we support children in, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

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

The statutory framework gives guidance about the expectations for activities and experiences for children as set out under each specific area of learning. At Westhead Lathom St James Primary School all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout The Foundation Stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area, at the appropriate developmental level. Within our areas of learning we focus upon common play behaviours and use these to plan, teach and extend our children from emergent play behaviours through to high level play behaviours. Our long term planning ensures coverage of skills, vocabulary and resources available so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. Our topics follow children's interests which allow flexibility to ensure that children's needs are taken into account and that learning is purposeful to them. We also celebrate events throughout the year to ensure their knowledge and understanding of the world around them is developed.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so, we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the reception teacher plans activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics 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.

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas; make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos is that we embrace inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs

We provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service and the educational psychologist amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Assessment

Throughout Pre-School and Reception, children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked. The children who are on track to meet the ELGs at the end of reception, will be monitored to ensure they stay on track. Those children not on track will have their needs identified and supported through intervention and/or extra support during taught sessions and continuous provision. The areas with the highest number of children not on track will also be a focus during continuous provision with more adult support directed to that area and those children not on track, encouraged to engage in play with the adult modelling play, vocabulary and skills in that area.

Ultimately, our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep some written and photographic evidence, along with teacher knowledge, staff discussions and communication with parents and carers, to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. We record their learning in an online journal system. Parents have full access to their child's learning Journal throughout the

entire time they are with us. They are then able to download and keep the journal at the end of the Reception year.

Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile which must be completed towards the end of the reception year.

Transitions

At Westhead Lathom St James Primary School we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end, we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

The reception teacher holds a parent meeting in the summer term with all parents whose children are due to start their reception year. This is to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child.

In the summer term all children have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers in the next class for three set mornings, to help them prepare for their new experiences.

This is in conjunction with all new Pre-School and Reception parents being offered a home visit by the class Teacher and Teaching Assistant prior to their child starting school. The visits take place during the first two days of the academic year. This gives the children the security of meeting with their teachers in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child.

If required, at the beginning of the school year new Pre-School children can have staggered entry times if their parents feel this is necessary or the Class Teacher feels it would benefit the child in order to ensure that they have the time to feel welcomed and to support them in exploring their new environment. This is discussed with Parents during the home visit.

Due to the majority of our reception children having attended our nursery the need for reception aged children to have a staggered start is not required. However, if a reception child is new to our school then a staggered start may be discussed with the parent prior to the start of the academic year.

During children's time in Pre-School and Reception a range of shared activities are planned to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout The Foundation Stage. Children in reception make use of the whole school facilities, such as the studio, playground and playing field for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school and for mixing with other children.

Community Links

At Westhead Lathom St James Primary School the Foundation Stage class enrich learning and encourages strong links with the local area through local visits and by inviting members of the local community into our school.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. Along with the visit days we also offer social events through the school PTA, plus the class Teacher is there to greet children as they enter the school, building relationships and being there to ask questions. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teacher.

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey. Parents are invited to assemblies and whole school Church events. They are invited to join in with trips outside school and to join in with a range of activities from supporting reading, writing and maths to sports day inside school.

From Pre-School parents have daily access to their child's online learning journal. They can comment and tell us about any achievements outside of school. Homework and supporting home learning is given through this system also. From Reception all parents are encouraged to support children's reading through completing reading records.

At Westhead Lathom St James primary school we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. We celebrate the children's progress and achievements, and share areas for further development. Children, parents and staff all have the opportunity to contribute. We provide parents with information about their child's baseline assessment during parents evening which is a formal parents meeting, where parents have the opportunity of speaking with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day. Each half term, we welcome Parents/Carers into school for our 'Stay and Play' session, a time when we can share our learning and achievements in class. Parents are informed of their end of the year assessment by a written report along with the opportunity to download their learning journal.

Health & safety and safeguarding

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and our children have access to fresh water, milk and fruit daily. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

We teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques, oral care and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.