



WHINGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY



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. In our school we have a 78 place Nursery and two Reception classes. In Nursery children are invited to visit shortly after their 3rd birthday. Whingate is partially flexible where 28 children can access two and half days in the week. We also offer ten 30 hour places where children access the Nursery from 8.45-3.15pm

Staffing in Nursery consists of 1 teacher, 3 nursery nurses and 1 teaching assistant. Reception has 2 teachers, 1 HLTA and 2 teaching assistants.

Aims

At Whingate Primary School in Foundation Stage 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 and fearless lifelong learners.

We will 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, emotionally, physically and intellectually 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 to start school

The Curriculum

At Whingate, Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document (updated in 2017), which is available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships

Enabling Environments

Learning and Development

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

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development

Our foundation stage consists of a large Nursery classroom, two Reception classrooms with a shared area and 2 large outdoor areas. 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, be quiet and rest. Areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** area of learning:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Communication and Language

Physical Development

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

At Whingate Primary school all areas are delivered through a well-planned directed and 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. Our long term planning ensures coverage 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. We follow a half termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. 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 play an active role in child initiated learning through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective learning and teaching. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan 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, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces 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 who are entitled to free school meals/pupil premium, 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 will 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 and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; 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 SENco and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service (Talking House), the educational psychologist and the early years support team. 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 Nursery and Reception children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

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, work produced by the children and moderation. We keep written and photographic evidence 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. Every child in Nursery and Reception has a 'WOW book' in which we put samples of the children's work as well as work that the children are proud of.

All children in Nursery and Reception are assessed within the first 2 weeks of starting the setting as a baseline. The assessment cycle is then carried out termly when the children are assessed in all 17 areas of learning. Every half term the practitioners take part in pupil progress meetings where the children, interventions, progress and impact is discussed and next steps identified.

Transitions

At Whingate Primary 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.

When a child turns 3, a letter is sent to parent's inviting them to come into Nursery to book in a start date and visits for their child. Before officially starting Nursery the child must do 4, one hour visits with a parent. A review meeting is held 6 weeks after a child has started Nursery.

For new children joining Reception a meeting in the summer term before the children start school is held. 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.

During the summer term the Reception children begin their transition to Year 1. Every week 6 children go into Year 1 to get used to the change in setting and to become familiar with the staff and expectations. Every child visits Year 1 at least once; vulnerable children visit more often.

During children's time in Nursery and Reception a range of shared activities are planned for all classes to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout the foundation stage. Children in both Nursery and Reception make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, library and playing field for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school and for mixing with older children when they start 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. We offer parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning, alongside this, parents are invited to regular stay and play sessions. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers.

At Whingate we value the importance of giving children and parent's the opportunity to celebrate the children's progress and achievements. This is done through weekly star worker assemblies where parents are invited to come and a class assembly during the year.

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 (updated 2017) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

All our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Each foundation stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

