



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Safeguarding Statement

West Heath Primary will continuously strive to ensure that everyone in our school is treated with respect and dignity. Each person in our school will be given fair and equal opportunity to develop their full potential with positive regard to gender, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, sexuality or disability. West Heath Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.

Owner	EYFS Lead
Date of review	December 2024
Date of next review	December 2025

West Heath Primary School Early Years is made up of two reception classes, with 30 children in each class.

Our Philosophy

The philosophy of our provision at West Heath Primary School underpins a curriculum founded on play; it is supported by a high-quality learning environment and provides a broad framework, in order for all children to learn effectively. Children need a relevant curriculum which is well planned, offers purposeful activities both indoors and outdoors and one which is structured in content, to consider the differing interests, backgrounds and abilities of our children. We allow for opportunities for children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves.

We believe that learning in Early Years is holistic. The individual needs and interests of children are at the heart of our curriculum. We are committed to play based, active learning inspired by children's interests. We know that a rich, enabling environment encourages children to take ownership of their own learning which promotes higher levels of involvement.

Our work has, at its core, the aim of enabling children to develop their emotional, social, cognitive, interpersonal and physical skills, and their desire to explore, discover and be creative. We believe that children who are confident in themselves and their own ability have a head-start to learning, we therefore ensure that all our pupils feel included, secure and valued. We encourage all children to 'Be a star and shine bright!'

The Curriculum

At West Heath Primary we follow the Early Years Framework (2022).

Within this framework there are four guiding principles which shape our practice. These are:

1. **Every child is a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
3. 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. Children **develop and learn at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Included throughout our Early Years curriculum are 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
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

'What children learn is important, but how children learn is even more important if they are to become learners in today's society.'

(Helen Moylett, How Children Learn, Nancy Stewart 2011)

Our curriculum encompasses the seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships, and thriving.

These are the **Prime Areas**:

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

Staff also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **Specific Areas** are:

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

Communication and Language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and form the foundations for language and cognitive development; therefore, we place a high focus on this area. Our environment is language rich, which promotes engaging interactions and conversations between children and adults. Children are read to frequently and are exposed to a range of text types including fiction, non-fiction, rhymes and poems to help broaden their vocabulary. Through conversations, story-telling and roleplay children share and articulate their ideas with support and encouragement to become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead happy and healthy lives; it underpins their personal development that shapes their social world. We strive to create strong and supportive relationships between children and adults, which enables children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children are supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self and have confidence in their own abilities. They will also learn about how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating and how to manage personal needs independently. Adults will support children to learn how to make good friendships, play and co-operate with others and resolve conflicts effectively.

Physical Development

- Fine Motor and Gross Motor

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development. Teaching focuses on supporting children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundations for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Children have regular opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and practice using small tools during provision, which all aid children to develop proficiency, control and confidence. They also take part in PE lessons to enhance these skills further.

Literacy

- Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing

We believe it is imperative for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Children are taught Phonics daily to support early reading and to learn letters and sounds following the Read, Write Inc phonics scheme. This develops children's ability to be able to decode and blend words to read them, it also supports the skill of segmenting to help begin early writing. These skills are applied throughout learning in the environment on a daily basis.

Mathematics

- Number and Numerical Patterns

We believe that developing a strong understanding of number is essential so that children can develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children have a daily Maths input following the NCETM Maths Mastery scheme. These sessions promote the use of mathematical language and vocabulary, reasoning and fluency and application of basic number knowledge. Children have access to a range of resources, such as using manipulatives including counters, cubes and tens frames to provide opportunities for children to utilise and apply their mathematical knowledge. In addition, we provide opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measure. We promote positive attitudes towards Maths and encourage a 'have a go' attitude by encouraging discussions and learning from mistakes.

Understanding the World

- Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World

We guide children to help make sense of their physical world and their community. We provide different experiences to increase their knowledge and understanding about the world around them. This includes from planned trips to the local farm, local walks and visits from members of the community. We introduce children to a range of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems which will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.

Expressive Arts and Design

- Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. Children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, allowing them to explore and play with a range of media and materials. We believe the quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. Children take part in a range of experiences throughout Early Years to develop this further.

Teaching and Learning

Our planning and curriculum are centered around the children, it is flexible to meet the needs and interests of the cohort throughout the year. We have a book focus for each week which is guided by the children's interests which demonstrates clear links to the seven areas of the EYFS framework. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Children engage in whole class and small group learning activities throughout the day alongside their independent learning in continuous provision. Children have daily phonics lessons following the Read Write Inc scheme, daily Maths lessons following the NCETM Maths Mastery approach and tricky word sessions. Each class also have two PE lessons each week led by specialised trained PE coaches. Children have weekly Topic and Music lessons, which provide additional learning opportunities linking to Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts and Design. From Autumn term 2, children visit our onsite Forest School providing learners with hands on experiences in the natural environment.

Enabling Environments

The learning environment is well planned and organised with a wide variety of resources available for children to access at all times. Children are encouraged to lead their own learning through play so areas are clearly labelled, tidy and well-resourced to ensure children can access what they need independently.

The labelling of resources is a key element of our philosophy in EYFS. All resources are labelled to develop independence during tidy up time and to create independent learning opportunities and discussions within the environment. This allows children to explore, shapes, sizes, quantities, values and problem solving.

As the children become confident with their environment and resources, the staff will change and substitute the resources for more complex challenges, for example word problems or shape names. This will ensure that the children are continuously, independently accessing challenge and stimulation from their immediate environment.

Tidy up time is independently undertaken by the children. This process isn't rushed as it is a key learning opportunity. Children have to ensure that; the correct number of pencils are returned to the pots; all of the different shaped bricks are put back correctly and everything is returned to its rightful home. This not only teaches children about taking responsibility for what they use, but also encourages mathematical discussions. For example, 'we are supposed to have 6 red pencils, but we only have 4, how many are missing?'

Children have access to both the inside and outside areas throughout the day and can free flow between both during continuous provision. One of the many benefits of outdoor learning is allowing children to take controlled risks and teaching them to become competent risk assessors. We strongly believe that children need to learn this essential skill for lifelong learning.

Assessment

Within the first six weeks of children starting school we carry out the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a short statutory assessment that must be completed by all children. We use this assessment, alongside our own observations and assessments of the children to plan and deliver our curriculum.

As part of our daily practice, we continually observe and assess children's development and learning to make formative assessments, which informs future planning and teaching.

We record WOW observations using Tapestry learning journals, which all members of the Early Years team contribute to. Over time observations are made in different learning contexts and at different times of the day to cover the breadth of learning opportunities. Observations may take the form of notes, photographs or videos.

We take part in moderation with local schools and are part of an EYFS Consortium network that meet regularly to share transition needs and moderate assessment judgements.

At the end of the year, the EYFS profile is completed for each child. Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. Teachers indicate whether children are meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected); or not yet reaching this level (emerging).

Parents as Partners

At West Heath Primary School, we value relationships with parents. We acknowledge the children's experiences at home and appreciate that these are highly significant to their achievement in school. We strive to create and maintain effective partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise together we can have the biggest impact on a child's learning journey.

We use Tapestry to keep parents informed of their child's development. We also encourage parents to add their own observations and photographs from home. This insight into a child's home life is invaluable and can lead the learning that takes place within school.

In addition, all staff are available at the end of each day to establish partnership with our families.

We invite parents/carers to parents' evenings in the Autumn and Spring Terms to discuss how their child has settled and to share progress and next steps for learning. We also invite parents/carers to join their children in various learning workshop opportunities; this includes Phonics, Maths, reading and well-being sessions.

At the end of the summer term parents will receive a report outlining their child's attainment and a short commentary about their child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning.

Transition – Starting School

At West Heath Primary School, we have an extensive transition process. That promotes a positive and successful transition for both children and parents.

In the summer term, before the children start school, members of the EYFS team visit the children in their nursery settings. Contact is established with key workers and key information is shared and passed on. It provides children the opportunity to meet staff in an environment which is familiar to them.

Children are then invited to attend a 'stay and play' session at school. During this session children can familiarise themselves with their new setting and begin to build relationships with the Early Years practitioners. Parents will attend a meeting to learn more information about school procedures and policies.

Children will be placed into a colour group for the first month of school. Each group has a designated key worker and will support children with their transition to starting school. Children begin school on a part time basis for the first week, to help children build relationships with staff and a small group of children and to get used to the new environment. Gradually throughout the week the group size will increase until all children attend together. Children will be split into classes at the end of September to ensure that children are grouped appropriately.

Transition – Moving to Year 1

Towards the end of the Reception year, Reception teachers meet with the Year 1 staff to discuss each individual child and their specific needs. This ensures continuity of learning and care. The children's EYFS profiles are shared with the teachers so they are able to plan for their next steps in learning.

Children will meet with their new teachers and spend time with them in the Early Years environment during continuous provision or story sessions. This allows for children to become familiar and comfortable with their new teacher. The children will then visit their new classrooms and spend some afternoon sessions there with their new teachers.

Parents/carers are also invited into school to visit their child's new classroom and meet the Year 1 teachers.

Monitoring

This policy will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. It will be reviewed biannually.