

# Weston Rhyn Primary School



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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### 1. Aims

This policy outlines the aims and principles for the Early Years Foundation Stage at Weston Rhyn Primary School. All Early Years Staff are responsible for the successful implementation of this policy and will use this to evaluate and monitor good practice.

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.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The learning and development requirements are informed by the best available evidence on how children learn and reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge and attitudes children need as foundations for good future progress. Early Years providers must guide the development of children's capabilities with a view to ensuring that children in their care complete the EYFS ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them.

Early Years teaching and learning at Weston Rhyn Primary School follows the principles of the EYFS guidance and lays secure foundations for children's later learning. We intend to foster independence and confidence in every child.

At Weston Rhyn we aim to ensure:

- The development of every child's communication and language skills is at the forefront of our daily practice and we believe that planning to help every child to develop their language and emotional literacy is vital.

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

## **2. Legislation**

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2023 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#).

## **3. Our Principles**

At Weston Rhyn Primary School, we strive to meet every child's entitlement to develop a love of learning that will enable them to have the best possible future life chances.

The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage states four overarching principles which should shape practice in the Early Years. These are:

- 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 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.
- Importance of learning and development. 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).

## **4. Learning and Development**

In the EYFS at Weston Rhyn, we support every child's learning and development through:

- The seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes. The areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.
- 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/carers).

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas and four specific areas of learning.

### **Prime Areas**

**Communication and Language:** We believe that the development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Thus, children's back-and-

forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. We comment on what our children are interested in or are doing, and echo back what they say with new vocabulary added, to ensure that we are building children's language effectively. We read frequently to children, and engage them actively in stories, rhymes and poems, and then provide them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, to give our children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from our teachers and support staff, and through sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, our children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** We believe that children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. We provide our children with strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults as they enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. We know children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

**Physical Development:** We believe that physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. We know that gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, our staff support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. We understand that gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional wellbeing. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. We provide our children with repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from our staff, to allow our children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

### **Specific Areas**

**Literacy:** We understand how crucial it is for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. We know that it only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words.

Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

**Mathematics:** We understand that developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. We know that children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. We provide frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will then develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that our curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measure. We feel it is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

**Understanding the World:** We know understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. We ensure that the frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, we ensure that our children are listening to a broad selection of stories, rhymes and poems to foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

**Expressive Arts and Design:** We know that the development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. We feel it is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. 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. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is through the characteristics of effective learning:

**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.

## **5. Structure of the EYFS**

Life in Early Years at Weston Rhyn is fun and filled with exciting, playful, and enjoyable learning opportunities. Our school values: 'Community, Courage, Respect' lie at the very heart of our Early Years curriculum offer. Every child is known and valued as an individual, across both classes. We work closely with our parents and carers and build strong relationships with them from the onset to ensure that each child is happy, safe and learning as much as they can. Our Nursery is led by a teaching team who immerse our children in their learning whilst providing them with the Early Reading, Phonics and Mathematics skills to prepare them for their journey into school.

The development of every child's communication and language skills is at the forefront of our daily practice and we believe that planning to help every child to develop their language and emotional literacy is vital. The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. We support children in their back-and-forth interactions from an early age as we know these form the foundations for language and cognitive development. We value the number and quality of the conversations our children have with adults and peers throughout the day and understand that a language-rich environment is crucial. Staff use a variety of strategies to build children's language effectively, to ensure that children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures. We also ensure that our daily practice allows and encourages our EAL learners to use their full linguistic repertoire in order to empower them and help them to realise their full potential. We actively encourage our children to speak, write and/or translate to and from their first language or any language they speak, as well as English, to support their learning.

In both Nursery and Reception, we use the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023' and 'Development Matters' to inform our unique curriculum offer, which is deeply rooted in early childhood development and supports all of our children to develop and learn. The framework sets out the three prime areas of learning that underpin everything in our early years: Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development. The four specific areas help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. We understand that all of the areas of learning are connected together and that the characteristics of effective teaching and learning weave through them all. That is because children in the Early Years are becoming more powerful learners and thinkers. These characteristics develop as they learn to do new things, acquire new skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become better communicators. We use these areas of learning to: underpin our broad and balanced curriculum offer; to ensure that our children's social and emotional needs are being met; and their wellbeing is being nurtured.

Throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree strategies to support the child. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for Year 1.

## **6. Our EYFS Curriculum**

In both Nursery and Reception we use the Early Years Framework and Development Matters to underpin our broad and balanced curriculum offer and to ensure that all children are provided with opportunities to find their talent and learn to respect the differences of others. Our staff continuously observe and assess children to ensure progress is being made.

All children in Nursery and Reception have a daily phonics session of 20 minutes. Children are taught as a whole class, with further support provided for children when needed. Nursery children focus on hearing sounds in words, learning stories, songs and rhymes and begin to identify letter sounds. Reception children will be taught to identify sounds, read and write simple words and sentences. We encourage our children to apply their phonics learning through their play and promote mark making, the use of print within the environment and story scribing.

Throughout Reception our children will progress through a range of phonetically decodable scheme books. Reading is taught through 1:1 sessions and all reading books used in these sessions are linked directly to their current phonics learning. Books are changed weekly throughout this stage as children are expected to re-read and practice fluency and decoding skills. Our children are taught in an environment that is rich in reading opportunities and reading is rigorously promoted and planned across the Early Years. We provide an inclusive and enabling environment for reading which empowers and encourages children to read a range of genres both in and out of doors. Every day, the whole class shares texts, which are beyond their independent reading ability. Story time is a special time where staff bring the books to life, thus providing a context for teacher modelling, teaching and applying reading skills. Children are encouraged to take home any of these books to share with an adult for pleasure, practise re-telling stories and to gain confidence in reading.

In our Early Years we aim to equip children with a sense of mathematics as part of their world, by providing them with opportunities for practical application of their understanding. In Reception, early mathematics is taught through daily Maths whole class and small group sessions focusing on all areas of maths. These sessions are used to introduce new vocabulary, ways of applying mathematical thinking or effective ways of using resources. We then encourage the children to continue to apply maths within their exploratory play and use this as a tool for mathematics as a whole. Our staff have given extensive consideration to how each area of our continuous provision is engendering mathematical understanding or rehearsal of skills taught in our Maths sessions. We want our children to bring their mathematical understanding into their experiences since this makes maths more real and more purposeful.

We value the importance of providing our children with exciting and stimulating experiences that further enhance our children's learning and development. We welcome visitors to school and provide opportunities for children to visit places within their local community; British Ironworks, local shops, woodland walks. These visits also ensure that our children are encouraged to think about what makes them feel safe at school and outside of school.

## **7. The Enabling Environment and the Importance of Learning through Play**

In the Early Years, the emphasis is on active learning both indoors and outdoors, with child-initiated learning and adult-led learning taking place based on observations of the children's interests and teacher assessments. We encourage all children to access their own resources and equipment for their activities. We aim to create irresistible indoor and outdoor learning environments, thoughtfully enhanced with authentic objects for children to explore, including items from the natural world. These resources spark curiosity, imagination and bring a unique quality to their learning and play.

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. We hope to inspire our little thinkers and develop their curiosity to learn more and remember more. We value the importance of play and how crucial it is to all areas of a child's development. We give our children time to become deeply involved in their play and

ensure that every detail of their school day is committed to knowledge and skills growth, with children applying their skills to situations and experiences, and opening up opportunities to develop new ones alongside them.

## **8. Planning**

We believe that children have a natural desire to learn, explore, discover and succeed. Our caring teachers and support staff plan a wide range of learning opportunities and use exciting provocations within the environment to ensure that children are motivated and deeply engaged in their learning. Our dedicated team listen to and observe our children closely to identify and follow each child's interests. By doing this, we recognise and take the opportunity to extend our children's interests and learning further, by facilitating key teaching opportunities and planning for our children's next steps.

Our team also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's learning, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. We teach thematically and use high quality, engaging stories to enhance the children's learning. Our themes include: Families and Friends, Wonderful World, Celebrations, Dinosaur Roar.

## **9. Assessment and Record Keeping**

All of our Early Years Team are actively involved in the assessment and monitoring process. Monitoring of Early Years practice is undertaken regularly to ensure the requirements of the EYFS are planned for and carried out effectively and the needs of all the children are fully met. We start this process before the child joins the Nursery, by listening to parent's accounts of their child's development and interests and note any concerns. This is collated into a baseline report with individual next steps for staff to consider during teaching.

Within the first 6 weeks of Reception, all pupils will complete the Reception Baseline Assessment which provides 'an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 (KS2) can be created.' (Reception Baseline Assessment Framework, February 2020). Each child will receive a series of narrative statements to describe their baseline performance, staff will use these statements to inform their practice when planning and observing.

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents/carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their age and stage, interests and next steps needed, and then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, they respond to day-to-day observations about children's progress, and observations that parents/carers share.

In the final term of the Reception year, each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they have not yet met the early learning goals.



Our EYFS team write reports which provide a more rounded picture of individual children at the end of the school year and hold Parent Consultations twice a year.

## **10. Admissions and Transition**

We welcome children into our Nursery the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday. The children will attend Nursery under the universal offer of 15 hours per week. Admission to the Nursery follows guidelines set out by Shropshire Council. The Nursery has capacity for a total of 30 children.

Children enter their allocated Reception class in September. All children can start school in the September of the year in which they are 5 years old. Again, strict procedures pertaining to admissions prevail and follow the Shropshire guidelines. We have one Reception class and can take a maximum of 30 children. Parents/Carers have the right to defer entry to the Reception class before the age of 5 years old in consultation with the Headteacher.

Our Early Years staff visit the children at home during the half term prior to them starting in both Nursery and Reception, as we feel this is an excellent way to build a strong partnership between our staff, children and their parents/carers. Home Visits allow us to get to know each child personally and gain a clear understanding of their backgrounds and starting points.

Reception children and parents/carers can expect:

- Our Early Years Team, Pastoral Team and SENDCo make contact with our children's prior settings or providers to discuss essential information. We visit as many pre-school providers as possible to meet children in a familiar setting. Our staff also use any written information provided by pre-schools to inform early planning.
- 'Welcome to Reception' meeting in July which provides our parents/carers with relevant information around our school prospectus and what to expect from their child's Early Years experience. This meeting gives our parents/carers the opportunity to hear from our Headteachers and Reception teacher.

## **11. Partnership working with parents and carers**

At Weston Rhyn, we believe that a child's education is a shared commitment between dedicated teachers, motivated learners and enthusiastic parents/carers with high expectations. Parents are our children's first and most enduring educators and we ensure that we use the information provided by our parents/carers to support children's development and progress.

All staff are available during drop-off and pick-up to discuss children's needs and all parents/carers are made to feel welcome and valued. Longer appointments can be made through the school office.

Our Early Years Team use a variety of ways to keep parents fully informed about the curriculum and activities on a regular basis:

- All half-termly overviews can be found on our website and are shared with parents/carers.
- Weekly newsletters are sent to parents/carers.
- Calendar events shared on Class Dojo calendar.
- Regular letters to inform parents/carers of trips and meetings.
- Curriculum information letters.
- Early Years Team parent/carer meetings to explain the principles of the stage and how it affects their child in Nursery and Reception as required.

- Phonics, Early Reading and Mathematics workshops to enable parents to support their child at home.

In the Reception class the following are also used:

- Reading diaries are used to communicate between school and home.

## **12. The Early Years Team and Working in Partnership**

Our Nursery and Reception Team consists of 2 Early Years Teacher and 2 Teaching Assistants. The benefits of working in partnership have a huge impact on the effectiveness of our EYFS setting. We value our partnerships and endeavour to actively maintain these by sharing information, ideas, expertise and our knowledge within our team and with parents, carers, colleagues and other professionals.

Within our role of enabling partnerships we:

- Meet weekly as an EYFS team to discuss assessments, planning, individual children and research.
- Work closely with our cluster schools to moderate work and share examples of good practice.

## **13. Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

At Weston Rhyn we ensure that children's unique needs are met and that they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We provide an environment which is welcoming, safe and stimulating. We safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in our care. We adhere to Weston Rhyn Primary School's child protection procedures and use CPOMs to record any safeguarding incidents which are then followed up by our Designated Safeguarding Leads. All staff undertake regular Child Protection training and Safeguarding is part of new staff induction.

## **14. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and approved annually by all Early Years Staff and will be updated by the Headteacher and shared with all staff. Learning walks, lesson studies and monitoring will take place regularly involving all Early Years Staff. The Senior Leadership team will monitor on a regular basis to ensure practice consistently reflects this policy. All staff access CPD as part of the school's CPD priorities. At every review, the policy will be shared with staff and School Governors.

## **Appendix 1**

List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy