



Early Year 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. Please also refer to the

No Platform, Visiting Speaker Policy.

Sir Michael Wilshaw says:-

“Early years provision is only as good as the quality of interaction between adults and children.”

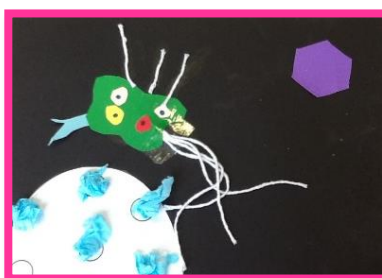
Our Philosophy

The philosophy of our provision at West Heath Primary School underpins a curriculum founded on play; it is supported by a high quality caring 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 take into account the differing interests, backgrounds and abilities of our children. Allowing opportunities to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves.

We aim therefore to provide a stimulating, attractive and exciting environment, which offers first hand experiences, opportunities to practice and consolidate developing skills and interests. In addition, we offer time to initiate and develop activities themselves and chances to encounter new challenges.

We believe that learning in the early years is holistic. We therefore consider the total development of the child as an individual: their social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs are given equal importance. 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.

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.



The Curriculum

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the learning aims and objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

There are seven areas of learning and development, which must shape educational provision in all early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected and none can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across these areas of learning. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for children to develop effectively and to give them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year. 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.

(DfE 2014: 1.3)

The three Prime areas are:

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

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

The four Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Three Characteristics of Effective Learning (Revised EYFS)

- **Playing and Exploring** – do they investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'?
- **Learning Actively** – do they concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements?
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – do they have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

At West Heath Primary School we strongly believe that children learn best when they are in an environment in which they feel safe and secure. This enables them to feel confident to follow their own interests, try new things, and take risks both physically and emotionally. In addition, it allows them to step outside their comfort zone to reach their full potential, knowing that they are within an emotionally secure environment with adults whom have a good knowledge and understanding of their individuality, supporting and encouraging their personal achievements.



Enabling Environments - Indoors

The environment supports children to be fully engaged in purposeful play of their own choice and interest. As with the outdoor area, the indoor area allows for learning in all areas of development, but the two areas do not mirror each other. This is the ideal place for children to be calm and quiet (and we enforce this requirement firmly and consistently), pursuing activities which require small equipment and using resources that will not survive the outdoor elements.

In the EYFS classes, the children initiate their own learning and adults join them and support them in their pursuits. In order to support genuine choice we have a workshop style environment setup in classes.

In all areas, the resources are available and accessible to the children at all times, but nothing is set out. The areas are clear, stocked and tidy at the start of the day:- the tables and carpet areas are free of equipment but the resources are available next to these areas.

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.



This allows the children to be in control of their learning. They are able to select the area in which to play, the resources to use in that area and what to do with them. Obviously their choices are limited by the areas and resources available and it is therefore crucial to have appropriate areas with varied, high quality, open-ended resources.

We constantly review and reflect on the environment to see which areas are proving productive and which need altering. Therefore it is necessary to keep the playdough away from the water and sand to avoid having to make new playdough every day.

It is also vital that the areas are well stocked, tidy, clearly labelled or shadowed and arranged to allow optimum access.



The shadowing of resources not only creates independence during tidy up time but also creates independent learning opportunities within the environment, allowing 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 these shadows 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.

The resources (as well as the areas) are assessed and reviewed constantly with changes made as necessary.



As previously, discussed children's learning is interconnected and their skills develop holistically. Therefore, multiple learning opportunities happen because of our enabling environment at West Heath Primary School, for example children naturally combine the creative area and the 'writing' area. Young children also combine their different types of mark-making – they make a card and write a message; they draw a picture and write a story; they create a robot and add labelled controls.

In many cases, they need creative equipment and writing implements – we therefore store them all in one area, as well as providing mark-making equipment in all areas. Additionally, children experience maths in almost all areas of their and we ensure that there is equipment (including numicon) in all areas to facilitate this.



This freedom of choice and accessibility allows children to make independent choices and creates an environment of endless opportunities, where children can develop holistically, learning multiple new skills and they are also free to take control of their learning, follow their interests, make decisions and take on new challenges.



Enabling Environments – Outdoors

Children have access to both the inside and outside areas across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor classroom area as well as its own mud kitchen. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors.

The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside. Our vision for outdoor provision is to allow the children the time to explore, discover and investigate. Enjoying large-scale movement, developing confidence, exploring and experiencing all weathers and seasons. Collect and use natural resources for a specific purpose and understand their natural environment and how it changes.



As with the indoor environment, the outdoor area is not set up and the resources are readily available for the children to independently self-select and lead their own learning, supported by adults whom follow the interests and lead of the children's selections.

One of the many benefits of outdoor learning is allowing children to take controlled risks and teaching them to become competent risk assessors. At West Heat Primary School, we strongly believe that children need to learn this essential skill for lifelong learning.

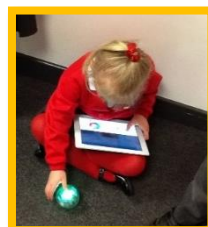
Enabling Environments – Provision



We review our provision in terms of levels of involvement. If an area or a resource is not engaging children in purposeful play, then we remove it or change it.

Areas that deliver the highest levels of involvement are the role play areas, creative area, small blocks, sand, water, playdough and small world equipment (including cars and dinosaurs). With regard to role play, we ensure that there is always a “home corner” (either indoors or outside) as this is what is familiar to the children – this is where they can practise being the adults that they know (and in doing so, develop the vital life skill of empathy). Other role play is set up as and when an interest emerges – as seen above with a vet’s office.

We have iPad, CD players and interactive white boards readily available to support and record learning.



We ensure that our book areas are as inviting as possible. We have books in numerous areas of the indoor and outdoor classroom – craft books in the creative area, cookery books in the role play, construction and reference books in the small world area.



Enabling Environments - Adults

The most valuable resource in any setting is the group of adults. The adults are there to teach, they do this through observing and interacting.

Adults must seek out the 'teachable moment' while the children are engaged, they know the children very well and have a sound understanding of child development. This ensures that the adults enhance and extend the learning at the appropriate level for each unique child. Generally, the adults go to the children. The children become involved in activities of their choice. The adults observe the children carefully, join them, when appropriate, and engage in quality interactions (teaching) to move the learning on, they "teach" through modelling, suggesting, providing vocabulary or resources, explaining or encouraging. In this way, if a child encounters a challenge, then they will not give up. Rather they will be supported to persevere, overcome the challenge and move forward in their learning.

In summary, any area or resource can be evaluated by assessing the levels of involvement that the children display. Children display the highest levels of involvement when they are pursuing their own interests in an environment that allows them to take risks and challenge themselves in their endeavours.

The physical environment needs to be well laid out and equipped with high quality, open-ended, varied resources. The adults are key in creating the emotional environment that supports them in this – ensuring that they feel confident and independent, ready to try new things in the knowledge that the adults will help them if necessary, without taking over.

Children will learn to do what children want to learn to do, so we support them by creating an enabling environment including enabling adults.

"The environment should act as an aquarium which reflects the ideas, ethics, attitudes and cultures of the people who live in it!"

(Loris Malaguzzi)

Teaching and Learning - Play

"Teaching should not be taken to imply a 'top down' or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations"

(OFSTED – September 2015)

At West Heath Primary School we believe that learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point we plan stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning. They have opportunities through play to think creatively and critically and are able to practise skills and build upon and revisit prior learning at their own level and pace. The children learn to investigate, adapt, negotiate, discuss, and ask questions.

It is therefore important that adults take an active role in this child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play and adult led activities is very important to us.

We include some direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge; it is often through children's play that we see how much of the learning children have understood and taken on.

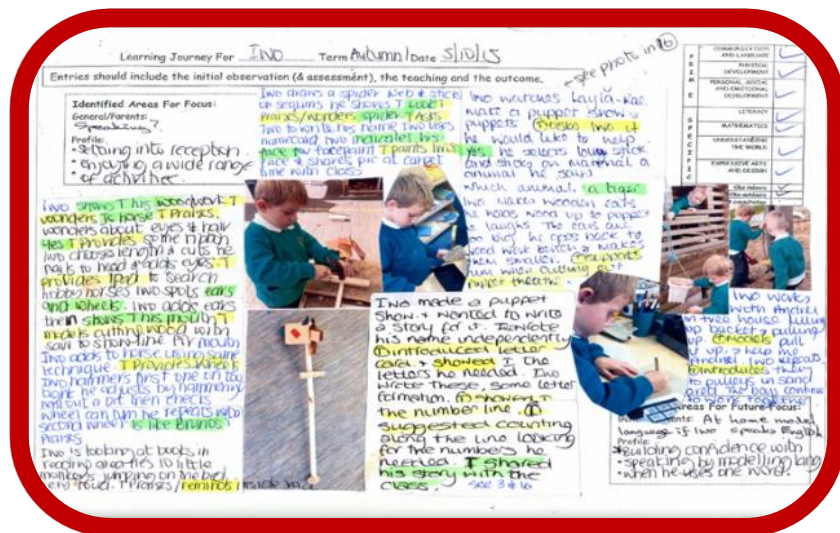
Our timetable includes opportunities to focus on all areas of the early years curriculum including, PSHE, maths, literacy, phonics, stories and rhyme, music and movement. The children also take part in daily phonics lesson, following the Read Write Inc scheme. The children also use Talk 4 Writing within literacy and 'Numicon' to support their understanding of mathematics. We ensure there is a good balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day.



Teaching and Learning - In the moment planning

"Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all the areas of learning and development."

(Revised EYFS)



Above is a completed example of tracking a child's interests, following 'In the moment planning' method.

We expect all our practitioners to continually plan "in the moment". Each time they interact with a child, they are observing, assessing, planning for, and responding to, that individual child.

The traditional cycle of observation, assessment and planning is recommended in numerous documents including Development Matters and The National Strategies document "Learning, Playing and Interacting". In this document we wish to highlight the section that states:-

"Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week.

"It is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest – the 'teachable moment' – that the skilful adult makes a difference." By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be always alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (assessment), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's well-being and learning (planning for the next moment)."

So what then does this look like in practice? The indoor environment has been explained above and the same principles apply outdoors. The aim is to organise the setting - including the time, the resources and the adults - to ensure that the majority of the children display deep levels of engagement for the majority of the time. If that happens, then we can be confident that they are making good progress. When deeply engaged, their brains will be "lit up", adults will notice when support is needed, interactions will ensure that obstacles are overcome or that new directions and possibilities are available and learning will be meaningful and fun!

As mentioned, an enabling environment is critical. When the children arrive, nothing is set out but everything is available and accessible. The children are supported to explore the environment to see what is available, to select the resources they would like, to use them appropriately and to tidy the area when they have finished. Tidy up time should be independently undertaken by the children. Because the children have got the resources out themselves, they know where to return them to. This process should not be rushed as it is a fantastic learning opportunity. Children have to ensure 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?



Planning to set ground rules in the first few weeks of a new school year is crucial when the children have so much autonomy and choice. EYFS staff must focus heavily on the routines and expectations from the outset. These rules are essential when so much freedom is given to ensure children feel safe in their environment. Clear and consistent expectations are key. For example, indoors the children will walk and use quieter voices – running and shouting can be done outside.

Our outdoor areas are designed to support all areas of the children’s development. The resources available are traditional sand toys, as well as natural shells, sticks, stones, etc. and cooking utensils, plates, cups, cutlery etc. to support a variety of play ideas. A water supply is essential, this allows for cooking, chemistry, cement mixing, moat filling or alchemy!

Our daily timetable is planned to maximise the amount of “free-flow” time available. This ensures that the children are the focus throughout the day instead of a particular activity that the adult has planned. We teach phonics formally, as well as a short whole class maths session. Once a week children also have a PE lesson led by Sports Coaches. Every day the class come together to share snack and listen to a story, which we believe teaches many social skills essential for their development.



Parents as Partners

At West Heath Primary School we value enormously our relationships with parents and actively encourage this bridge between home and school. We acknowledge that the children's experiences at home and appreciate that these are highly significant to their achievement in school.

Our parents are their child's first educators and they need to feel the value of this role. So we make time to talk to parents and explain the learning experiences of school. We then relate them to possible activities at home.

With this in mind we like to actively encourage that children's experiences at home are valued within the classroom, we therefore have a weekly scheme in place whereby, on a Friday 3 children are selected who will be the "focus children" for the following week. These children are given a form to take home for their parents to complete – asking about current interests of the child, any special events in the family and any questions the parents may have. Parents are also encouraged to send in photographs for the children to share. This insight into a child's home life is invaluable and provides a starting point for the learning that will take place throughout the week.

On Monday an A3 "Learning Journey" sheet for each of the focus children is put on the planning board. These sheets are blank (except for a couple of words to indicate areas that the staff or parents would like to try and capture). During the week any adult who has a productive interaction with a focus child records the event on the learning journey. It is important that the whole cycle is recorded – i.e. the initial observation, the assessment, the planning, teaching and the outcome. An example of such an entry might read:-

"Ross was looking at the plants and said 'I need some carrots for my soup'. He started to pull up some onions. I joined him and explained how to look carefully at the leaves and told him what the leaves on the carrot plants looked like. He examined the plants carefully and then pulled up three carrots."

This then informs the child's learning journeys as discussed above, creating a holistic view of the whole child, from the view of all-important adults from the child's life.



In addition, all staff are available at the end of each day to establish partnership with our families. Parents and carers are welcomed into the classroom if they wish to talk about anything they feel they wish to share or ask.

Parents are also invited to join their children in morning stay and learn sessions and various learning workshop opportunities throughout the year, including phonics, maths, WOW days and many more.



We use our class blogs via the West Heath Primary School website to document what we are learning and to offer parents tips for helping their child at home, and for making and strengthening the links between learning in school and experiences outside school, ensuring our partnerships with parents is strong and valued.

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

Assessments

Baseline assessments are completed as soon as the children enter school. The results of these assessment are recorded in classroom monitor. Assessment in the Early Years is based on the adult's knowledge of child development, in line with statutory regulation. As each child enters the Foundation Stage staff will use their professional judgement to assess the age band children are working 'within' across the EYFS 17 areas of learning over a 4 week period. Children will then be given a 'baseline' assessment.

Formative Assessment

Adults in contact with the child on a daily basis observe their development and progress both inside and outside and record this using 'Classroom Monitor'. Written observations, photos and drawings contribute to the summative report. Over time observations are made in different learning contexts and at different times of the day to cover the breadth of learning opportunities.

| | Start of the Year | Autumn | Spring | Summer |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Falling Behind | Up to 30-50E | Up to 30-50S | Up to 40-60E | Up to 40-60S |
| Slightly Behind | 30-50D / 30-50S | 40-60E | 40-60D | Emerging ELG |
| On Track | 40-60E | 40-60D | 40-60S | Expected ELG |
| Slightly Ahead | 40-60D | 40-60S | Emerging ELG | Expected ELG |
| Exceeding | 40-60S | Emerging ELG | Expected ELG | Exceeding ELG |

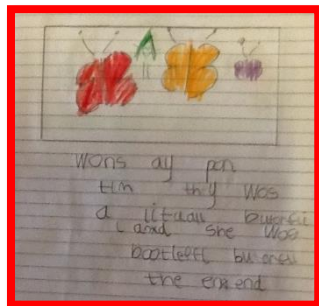
E – Emerging D – Developing S - Secure

Our aims are to ensure that the starting point for assessment is the child and not a predetermined list of skills. Observations should show what the child can do – significant achievements – not what they can't do.

Reporting at the end of the EYFS

In the summer term Reception children's Learning Journey is completed. It should provide parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

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 exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').



Transition – Starting School

When a child sets off for their first day at school, they should be full of positive emotions – excitement, confidence and happiness. This happens if they know exactly where they are going, who will be there, what they will be able to do when they get there and how long they will be staying there. A successful transition means the child settles quickly into school, learning and developing from day one. Practitioners welcome a class of children and these children are settled, confident and ready to learn.



Transition is successful when:-

1. Practitioners know each child, including their interests and needs
2. The school is able to meet these interests and needs
3. Practitioners have formed a relationship with each family
4. Children know the practitioners
5. Children are familiar and happy with their new school environment, its routines and expectations
6. Children have met and made friends with some of the other children who will be in their class

Therefore at West Heath Primary school we have an extensive transition programme, that promotes a positive and successful transition for both child and parent/ carer. In the summer term, before the children start school, members of the Reception Team visit all children in their settings e.g. nurseries and childminders. In this way contact is established with key workers and information can be passed on.

Children starting Reception are given an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with parents/carers to enable staff to quickly get to know the children and their likes and worries about school.

Reception teachers then carry out home visits in the summer term before the children start school to provide parents and carers with information to help the transition to school to be as smooth as possible. It also gives parents/carers time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their children. This also gives each child the security of meeting with staff in a safe, familiar environment and allows key information to be passed on.

In addition in the summer term, Reception children have the opportunity to 'stay and play' on three occasions, twice with their parents and once on their own.

At the beginning of the school year the new reception class have a prompt start to school and begin full time school immediately, as we have found this enables the children to settle extremely quickly and reduces child and parent anxieties.

Transition – Moving On

Transition at the end of the year, reception children meet with their new teachers and spend a whole week with them in their new classrooms prior to starting Year One.

Parents/carers are also invited into school during this week to take part in a morning or afternoon of activities, to visit their children's new classrooms and meet the teachers.

An overview of the year's expectations are shared with children and parents and any additional information is given.

At the end of the year, Staff from Reception meet with Year 1 teachers and pass on reports, reading records and children's learning. Meetings also take place between Nursery and Reception staff to make the transition as smooth as possible.

The autumn term in Year 1 continues to follow the Early Years model of child led learning. Setting up the environment in this way and having a flexible timetable, with continuous provision, enables the children to settle into their new year group quickly and continue to progress in their development.

