



# Whitehall Nursery and Infant School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

### Rationale

At Whitehall, the early years curriculum is concerned with the child, the setting in which the learning takes place as well as the context of the learning. The content of learning should build on what the child already knows. The teacher ensures opportunities for supporting and extending learning and developing knowledge through new experiences. The whole child is considered to be important - social, emotional, physical, intellectual and moral development is interrelated. There is potential in all children, which emerges powerfully under favourable conditions. Children should be given the time to actively explore the environment, set their own challenges and make their own discoveries. Children need opportunities for learning through play.

### Aims and objectives

In Early Years at Whitehall Nursery and Infant School we encourage all pupils to:

- feel included, secure and valued.
- engage in a relevant curriculum with tasks that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- join in with opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children plan or initiate themselves. Practitioners will consider the individual needs and interests of each child, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- learn through play.
- work and learn in an environment that develops children's imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- work with others including peers, teachers, support staff, parents and carers.
- be well organised and have access to a resource based environment.
- have personal autonomy and a sense of responsibility.
- maintain and look after resources so they can enjoy and explore them frequently.
- reflect on the cultural interest of others.
- have first-hand experiences both inside and outside of the classroom.
- explore, question, predict and hypothesise.
- take pride in their learning and build a sense of achievement.
- apply new skills with confidence and understanding.
- establish positive relationships with children and adults in the early years department.
- engage in purposeful, effective learning outdoors.

### Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The Statutory Framework for Early Years organises learning and development in Early Years into seven areas of learning; three prime areas and four specific areas, as stated below:

Prime areas of learning:

- Communication and language.
- Physical development.
- Personal, social and emotional development.

Specific areas of learning:

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

The framework also details the characteristics of effective learning. These underpin achievement in the prime and specific areas of learning and play a central role in a child becoming an effective learner. At Whitehall Nursery and Infant School, our curriculum is centered on providing opportunities to develop these characteristics in all areas. The characteristics are as follows:

By playing and exploring:

- Finding out and exploring
- Using what they know in their play
- Being willing to have a go

Through active learning:

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping on trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

By creating and thinking critically:

- Having their own ideas
- Using what they already know to learn new things
- Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways

## **EYFS Curriculum at Whitehall**

Here at Whitehall, our curriculum is specifically structured to:

- enable children to actively develop interests over a period of time,
- build on the experience and knowledge that the children have acquired outside school,
- offer opportunities for children to work at different levels of challenge, including children identified as 'Most Able' or with 'SEND' needs.
- involve everyday objects or events.
- be enriched by role play opportunities.
- increase the potential of social play in the classroom.
- support effective learning outdoors- providing opportunities to emulate, develop, deepen and explore concepts that children are learning in a purposeful, natural environment.
- enable the teacher to plan and adapt the learning environment of the classroom and outdoor learning spaces to ensure that the full range of particular learning needs are met,
- offer time and freedom for children to be successful, independent learners through effective child-initiated provision.
- ensure continuity and progression between the Foundation Stage department (Nursery and Reception)
- offer a broad and balanced curriculum.
- incorporate the Early Learning Goals, Walsall's Early Years Documents and government framework guidance (e.g. statutory framework, development matters).

In Nursery and Reception, half-termly topics are taught as part of our thematic curriculum. These themes are closely linked to 'cornerstones' topics that we have adapted. This approach embeds children's personal interests with vibrant, engaging topics to promote learning. 'Hooks' for learning are used to capture children's interest and imagination in all topics, using books and print-rich materials where possible.

Children learn in adult-directed sessions, whole class groups, small groups and child-initiated opportunities. Early Years classrooms and outdoor spaces are organised to promote learning by providing engaging and irresistible environments. To enhance outdoor provision we also offer 'Forest Schools' provision for Reception children. Please see the 'Forest Schools' policy for more information.

## **New starters into Foundation stage**

The beginning of the day must be well organised and members of staff, parents and children each have a role to play. Each must be clear about their roles and responsibilities. A member of staff will be strategically placed at the entrance gate at the start of session with extra staff to support.

Members of staff must remain vigilant and not be distracted whilst greeting parents and children at the beginning of the day.

Adjusting to a new environment can be stressful for children. It may involve strong feelings and emotions, such as sadness, anxiety, or excitement. Some children may express their emotions by withdrawing, crying and kicking. The staff will respond by taking the child off the parent by guiding them into school. All staff will follow the Physical Intervention and Restraint Policy if it is necessary to use for the safety and the well being of the child and other children. Staff will respond predictably and consistently to children's needs in order to develop a trusting relationship. They will engage children in warm, supportive interactions and model positive social behaviour.

## **Parent Partnership**

We recognise that a child's primary educator is their parent/ carer! Because of this, we establish close home- school links to ensure successful partnership. This gives us opportunities to share information, knowledge and expertise to support and promote learning for each and every child that attends Whitehall Nursery and Infant School. To keep parents involved in children's learning we:

- Host 'induction' sessions for both parents and children in the summer term before transition to get to know families, children and share expectations, aims and curriculum targets.
- Ensure that transition is carefully planned and that parents and pre-school settings are involved to ensure families are supported as their child joins our school.
- Regularly communicate with parents/ carers how the curriculum is being delivered.
- Send home curriculum topic webs each half term to keep parents/carers informed about what their children are learning with suggestions for how to support this at home.
- Host regular stay and play sessions, where parents/ carers are invited into school to join children in their learning environment.
- Operate an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Host regular parents meetings at school where children's progress is shared and celebrated together as well as sharing targets and strategies to support learning at home.
- Use 'Tapestry' to record children's observations, comments and learning which is shared with parents/ carers weekly and allows for dialogue between home and school. We also encourage parents to use 'Tapestry' to share child's experiences and learning from home with us, which develops an effective two-way supportive partnership.
- Provide an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals, EYFS assessment scales and characteristics of effective learning.

## **SMSC and PHSE**

At Whitehall Nursery and Infant School we recognise that the Early Years is the foundation of children's understanding and attitude towards SMSC and PHSE. As part of their social development children develop a sense of positive relationships through partner and group work and opportunities for children to initiate their own learning activities. This allows children to recognise and identify similarities and differences between themselves and others and learn to appreciate and value them. Children's moral development is key in Early Years as it the foundation for their futures. We cater for this by learning about making the right choices to keep themselves safe, sharing, appreciating others and showing compassion, where needed. Spiritually, children are able to discover the wonder of the world by being offered exciting and enriching opportunities in all areas of the curriculum. We promote children's cultural development by promoting understanding of different festivals and celebrations from around the world. Healthy living eating is promoted at Whitehall as part of our PHSE offer to children. Children learn about how to lead a healthy lifestyle including diet, exercise and mental well-being. Part of this is emulated through a healthy, physical and practical curriculum which maximises the use of outdoors in all learning opportunities.

## **Pupils' Experiences**

In Early Years, opportunities will be created for pupils to:

- Build lifelong skills, which can be applied in many areas of future life.
- Enjoyment from engaging in interactive, practical lessons.
- Work in a variety of ways- in groups, in partners, alone, as a class.
- Opportunities to develop personal interests- e.g. by attending clubs, engaging in activities of their choice, freedom to direct their own learning contexts.
- Opportunities to flourish in learning using different resources.
- Opportunities to flourish in different learning environments- both indoors and outdoors, learning in and through different types of weathers
- Have lots of hands on opportunities to explore, discover, question, develop ideas, create, dismantle, fix and share.
- Opportunities to succeed and to fail and to learn resilience.

## **Early Years and Inclusion**

At Whitehall Nursery and Infant School, the Early Years environment is available to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. This is in line with the school's curriculum policy of providing a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. This is achieved through specific planning which is carefully differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils, additional resources or learning prompts (if required), targeted teacher support through 1:1 opportunities, small group work and directed questions and LSA support, where needed. For further details see the relevant SEN, Pupil Premium and More Able policies.

## **Assessment for learning**

Children demonstrate their ability in the Early Years in a variety of different ways. Teachers will assess children's learning by making informal judgments as they observe them during lessons. By asking frequent and directed questions, throughout the lessons, to assess their learning and immediately address any misconceptions. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and gives oral or written feedback, as necessary, to support the child in making progress. Pupils are also encouraged to make judgments about how they can improve their own work. A judgement is made by the class teacher with regard to the progress a child has made and this is recorded.

We use Tapestry in Early Years to both document a child's learning journey and record their progress in line with development matters ages and stages.

## **Resources**

The following is a list of resources that are readily available in all Early Years classrooms in order to help deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. These are only the EYFS specific resources. Children also have access to whole school resources (iPads, chrome books, library, kitchen, hall, musical instruments to name a few).

- Small world trays for retelling stories
- Role play areas
- Large and small construction
- Sand and water
- Book corners with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Writing table with a range of writing resources
- Table top and small world toys
- Computers
- Interactive whiteboards
- Malleable materials
- Musical instruments
- Painting and creative area
- Maths games and equipment
- Outside classroom – a safe, fenced area including a tree house, water feature wall, giant sand pit, caves, outdoor chalkboards, planting equipment and areas, small sand pits, water trays, outside toys.

### **Monitoring**

The coordination and planning of the Early Years curriculum is the responsibility of the leader, who also:

- supports colleagues keeping informed about current developments in Early Years and by providing a strategic lead and direction;
- discusses progress with the head teacher and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in their subject and highlighting areas for further improvement;
- arranges time to review evidence of the children's work;
- observes Early Years lessons taught by class teachers in order to provide constructive feedback, highlighting positive areas and areas for improvement; directing colleagues to sources of support including in house good practise;
- Provide a termly summary to Governors.

**This policy will be reviewed every three years.**

Signed: K. Cripps *Kripps*

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