



## WEST TYNE FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS



### Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

**Our Vision..... Inspire, Support, Believe, Achieve**

Our Mission.....

Our values-based schools nurture curiosity and creativity through an inspiring, broad and engaging curriculum, where learning is at the heart of all that we do. Our children learn to become resilient and self-assured in an environment where safety is paramount. Everyone is challenged and encouraged to thrive and achieve as individuals, preparing them for their role as caring and active citizens in modern Britain.

The Federation is committed to the personal development of all involved and aim to provide life- long learning.

We aim to provide extended facilities in both our schools in order to support each child on their learning journey.

#### **Introduction**

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their maximum potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its’ own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

#### **Principles**

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

##### **A unique child.**

- We recognise that no two children are alike: physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. Even if there are common needs and characteristics, we understand their uniqueness and individuality must be respected. We treat every child as a unique individual. We help to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties,

disabilities or gender. We aim to understand and support each individual child's developmental pathway. We teach children to take responsibility for their own actions. We treat them as equals in every aspect of our daily life and strive to nurture honest, caring children who may good choices that celebrate them for the unique individuals they are. We recognise that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

### **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. We have a key role in building the right conditions for learning, respecting each child's own rate of development and challenging them from their starting points. We ensure that children feel valued as individuals, safe and cared for and build trusting relationships with children. We know that it is important that parents are involved in their child's learning and development. We recognise that contributions that parents make through sharing information about their child are crucial if we are to help them to become effective partners in learning.

### **Enabling environments:**

- We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. In the EYFS the environment is described in terms of three aspects: The emotional environment, the outdoor environment, the indoor environment. These three aspects of the environment together make up the environment for play and learning in the EYFS.
- We aim to create an environment that is warm, welcoming and nurturing and facilitates a sense of belonging. We offer a range of resources, which are familiar to the children, as well as activities that are new to them. We ensure there is sufficient space for the children to move and collaborate, and encourage exploration and risk-taking. We provide a range of activities which serve different purposes: inspire imagination and role play, exploration of personal relationships and feelings, problem-solving, quiet time and reflection. We consider what children are interested in and incorporate this into our environment.
- We understand the importance of building warm and supportive relationships and recognise the importance of nurturing a child's development. We involve children in making the ground rules for behaviour and creating the behavioural codes of practice by involving them in the process. We engage children in activities to build their emotional resilience, social skills and help develop a growth mindset.

## Learning and development:

- We recognise that children are developing all the time and that their learning needs to reflect this. The revised EYFS uses the term Learning and Development to describe the seven areas of learning. These are all related to each other; however, they are divided into Prime and Specific Areas.

- **Prime Areas:**

**Communication and Language** – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking.

**Physical Development** – Moving and Handling and Self-care.

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness.

- **Specific Areas:**

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society:

- **Literacy** – Reading and Writing.

- **Mathematics** – Numbers and Shape, Space and Measures.

- **Understanding the World** – People and Communities, the World and Technology.

- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Exploring and Using Media and Materials and Being Imaginative.

In addition, the Revised EYFS refers to the different ways that children learn as the

## Characteristics of 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.

Together with the Prime and Specific areas these comprise the knowledge, skills and experiences that are developmentally appropriate for children from birth to 5 years. Underpinning all areas are the EYFS Principles.

- The Foundation Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and 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 and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

We recognise that early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At the West Tyne Church Schools we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

### **Aims**

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes.

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At West Tyne Church Schools, we aim to:

- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally;
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, 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 developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.
- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to make progress by providing appropriate and challenging learning experiences.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development, through using the Cornerstones Curriculum and question-based learning approach.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are fully inclusive.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All staff who work in the Foundation Stage, children and parents/carers are involved in this process.

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available from the school office or to download at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf)

We use the Cornerstones Curriculum for themes, White Rose for Maths and STEM activities in EYFS which are question-based/problem-solving approaches. The planning within the EYFS takes into account the children's interests. Children are involved in the process and each theme starts from the child's knowledge and understanding.

We make regular/ongoing assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observations, formative assessments and summative assessments. We use the Cornerstones Curriculum Assessment tracking grids to record achievement linked to development matters statements. This information is collated each half-term and data is fed into the whole school data analysis.

We use Tapestry to share our observations with parents and to provide next steps. Parents also contribute to Tapestry to share what their child knows and can do. We use school360 and Reading Eggs as programs to enable children to practise skills at home.

Homework is set on a weekly basis and copies of homework expectations are posted onto the school website half-termly. The West Tyne Church Schools also use the website and Facebook to share information with parents. Children, parents/carers and staff are all involved in a child's learning journey from planning through to assessment and evaluation.

We have weekly newsletters to keep parents informed of children's learning opportunities. We also hold shared sessions and parent/teacher consultations on a termly basis.

At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents/carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed in the final Parents' Evening in Reception.

There are opportunities throughout the year, for parents/carers to respond to initiatives and practice in EYFS through the completion of questionnaires.

### **Teaching strategies:**

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the Summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

**Play:**

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 provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They 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 experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

**Teaching:**

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

Each day we follow a visual timetable with set routines in place. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc...

Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class story during the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child is given their own book bag and will have one-to-one time sharing books with an adult (although it is fine for others to listen too!). They also have daily guided reading sessions.

**The Transition Process**

We have strong links with our pre-school providers and children from pre-school (rising 5's) are encouraged to attend school on a daily/weekly basis through story/music sessions, stay and play sessions and through joint visits etc. We also have access to the same outdoor learning space and those children who continue to need nursery experiences are able to use their facilities as needed. During the Summer Term, children from pre-school are invited to visit for a whole day or two dependent upon need. The foundation staff will visit pre-school settings to

familiarise themselves with both staff and children. Prior to children attending our foundation stage classrooms, staff will carry out transition talks and any records will be passed forward to reception staff. When children join the school in September the children start full time straight away.

## **Home and School Links**

Partnership with parents/carers:

We believe that parents/carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer a 'Meet the Teacher' new parent session at the beginning of the school year and offer parenting workshops and other sessions for parents.

Working in partnership can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We develop this working relationship between the school and parents/carers as follows:

- We outline the school's expectations in a Home-School Learning Contract.
- We hold a parent/teacher consultation early in the year to establish how a child is settling in to the school environment.
- We use Tapestry online learning journal which is accessible to both parents and staff to enter observations of what a child knows/can do and to provide next steps in learning.
- We operate an "open door" policy that will allow parents/carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will contact parents/carers to discuss them.
- We conduct 'workshops' for parents/carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home.
- We provide regular opportunities for parents/carers to come and visit our school for events, sharing of work etc.
- We publish information about homework, planning, children's learning experiences on different media – weekly newsletters, Tapestry online learning journal, school360, reading eggs, the school website and Tapestry to keep our parents informed and improve communication (subject to parental permissions).



## **Intimate Care**

“Intimate” care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child’s age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practice for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring intimate care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

No “intimate care” is to be given without the express written permission of the parent/carer of that child and all parents/carers will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins the schools.

## **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

All children will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with SEND. We carry out early identification and use half-termly data analysis to ensure that all children are making at least expected progress from their given starting points. Classroom Support Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require support – additional to or different from that of their peers. Early identification procedures are outlined in our Special Educational Needs Policy. The school’s SEND Co-ordinator (Mrs Clarke) is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents/carers and for arranging external intervention and support as required. This will be done in collaboration with and through discussion with all parties involved.

In line with the school’s Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

## **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 (2014)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/299391/DFE00337-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE00337-2014.pdf) and the West Tyne Church Schools also have their own 'Safeguarding Policy' which is available from the school office or on the school website.

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads/cameras to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's portfolios, in class displays, on Tapestry, Facebook and on the school website. All parents are asked to state and sign if they give permission for their child's image to be used in these ways.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit. They are also entitled to free milk up to the term that they are 5. After this, parents can opt in to daily milk for a small contribution.

Our children in reception are entitled to have a free school lunch at present. They can also opt to have a packed lunch if they wish – the school has policies in place regarding providing a healthy packed lunch option which parents are encouraged to follow.

We take all accidents seriously and always log and inform parents of any incidents during school time.

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e. wet themselves!) and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed.

All large climbing equipment is checked regularly by staff – there is also an annual external check of equipment. Fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy.

We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Sarah Hutchinson, head teacher, is the named Child Protection Officer and all concerns are discussed with her.

We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.