

EYFS Policy



Whiteshill Primary School

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. 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.'

'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage',

Department for Education, 2012

Curriculum

Overarching Principles:

The four guiding principles that shape our practice are:

- *A unique child* - Every child is unique. They are 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 strong partnership between practitioners and parents/ carers.
- *Children develop or learn in different ways* (see the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning') and at different rates.

We follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and use the 'Development Matters' document to support the delivery of the seven areas of learning. These areas are split into three prime areas and four specific areas. All areas are important and interconnected. None of the areas can be delivered in isolation from the others.

The 3 Prime Areas:

- **Communication and Language** - Children will be provided with a language rich environment which results in quality conversation with adults in the setting. Children will consistently be read high quality texts, actively engaging them in stories, non-fiction and poems. Through conversation, role play and story-telling, support and careful modelling from the teacher and sensitive questioning that encourages them to elaborate, children will gain a rich range of vocabulary and language.
- **Personal, Social, Emotional Development** - Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults will enable children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. They also help children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage their emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals and have confidence in their own abilities. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies including healthy eating and managing their personal needs independently.
- **Physical Development** - Opportunities will be provided for play indoors and outdoors where children can develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination and agility. There should be repeated and varied opportunities to develop gross motor and fine motor precision with feedback and support from adults, allowing children to develop proficiency, confidence and control.

The 4 Specific Areas:

- **Literacy** - Children will be exposed to a wide range of vocabulary with adults talking about the world around them and sharing books (stories and non-fiction), rhymes, poems and songs together. Children will be encouraged to link sounds and letters and begin to write. Skilled word reading (taught later) involves the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar words.
- **Mathematics**- Children will learn to count confidently, developing a deeper understanding of numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns in those numbers. Children will develop a secure base of knowledge and maths vocabulary. They will be provided with opportunities to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including space, shape and measure. Children will develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, looking for patterns/ relationships and spotting connections.
- **Understanding the World**- Involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. Children should be offered a frequent range of experiences to increase their knowledge and sense of the world around them. In addition, children should be exposed to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems that will foster their understanding culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. This will enrich and widen children's vocabulary which will support later reading comprehension.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** - Children will 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.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

To guide the planning and delivery of activities in our setting we reflect on the different ways the children learn by considering the three 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.

Staffing and Organisation

At Whiteshill Primary School, we have one reception class that has use of a classroom and dedicated outdoor area. The classroom has a 'carpet area' and the rest of the space is organised into learning areas for the children to access. There are two teachers who share the role of class teacher over the week, supported by a full time TA.

Staff are organised to support children in a balance of child initiated and adult led experiences throughout the day. All sessions include free flow access to our outdoor area. Practitioners are aware that they need to be flexible in order to respond to unplanned events the children show interest in.

Teaching and Learning

Environment

'Young children learn from those they trust and with those who foster enthusiasm for learning' (Trevorthen 2002)

At Whiteshill we believe that the environment (both emotional and physical) in the Early Years classroom plays a crucial part in ensuring the successful development of our children.

'The emotional as well as physical environment impact significantly on a child's willingness to relax and share their thinking and ideas' (Fisher 2016)

Emotional environment: Children need to feel relaxed and trusted by staff so they are able to flourish and engage in their learning. Therefore, staff need to be warm, attentive and relaxed with the children in order to foster these crucial relationships. This also needs to extend to parents and carers to ensure that the long term partnership with the school begins in the most positive way possible. Home visits prior to the school year beginning play a large part in establishing the foundations for these relationships in a secure and familiar place for parent and child.

Physical Environment: At Whiteshill we believe that the physical environment in the classroom needs to be an **enabling one**. It needs to be conducive to talk and high quality interactions between staff and children. This is achieved through constant review of how the structure, set up and resources are supporting the children at that particular point in their learning.

Continuous provision (CP): Getting CP right is the most integral part of our day in EYFS. 'Get it wrong and the children cannot progress but rather stagnate in an environment that offers little challenge or opportunity. Get it right and you give your

children the very best start and an atmosphere in which they can thrive.' (Bottrill 2018)

We continually review our CP to ensure that it is **skills based, open ended and provokes and facilitates learning**. We regularly ask ourselves these questions about our CP:

- Does it promote the skills that we are currently trying to develop?
- Does it link to the interests that the children are currently demonstrating in our setting?

A range of high quality resources are **continuously** on display and readily available for the children to access indoors and outdoors. These resources are reviewed and adjusted regularly based on the children's ongoing developmental needs.

Shelving units are used wherever possible so that the children can access these resources freely and return to them if they wish throughout the day. For example, in our creative area the children ways have access to paint, craft materials, scissors, glue and colouring pencils. Everything is displayed simply, clearly and neutrally so the children do not become confused and is labelled to encourage independent skills for using and tidying away.

Enhanced provision (EP): Enhancements are placed into certain parts of the CP each week to support the focus learning objectives at that point. These resources/ activities should only act as enhancement to the high quality continuous provision already in place and should as much as possible be based on the children's current interests/ fascinations.

Displays: Displays in the EYFS classroom should encourage purposeful engagement from the children at all points. In other words, they should not become 'wallpaper' after a short period of time and should provide opportunities for interaction. For example, learning journeys that show the progression of the children's interests and learning over the period of a term.

As much as possible they should be in neutral tones to encourage a calm and purposeful environment which places importance on the children's achievements or next steps.

Effective Teaching & Learning:

Adult led activities are practical in nature and based on first hand experiences wherever possible. The children are supported to develop problem-solving skills through open-ended tasks and opportunities to share their thinking with others. The number of adult led activities that the children take part in increases throughout the year, as their concentration develops.

Observations & Assessment:

At Whiteshill Primary we use a range of strategies to gather information about the children's learning and development and use this information to ensure that our planning meets the needs of all learners.

We recognise that 'there are times when learning alongside an adult is most effective way to learn and times when an adult inhibits what needs to learned.' (Fisher 2016)

Therefore, we work hard to strike an effective balance of child initiated and adult led learning in our day and record it in the most purposeful/ useful way possible.

Observations during child led learning should be a 'snap shot' of that particular moment and recorded using our digital evidence resource - Target Tracker. These observations form a picture of all seven areas of the children's learning and help to inform future planning and assessment. Observations can also be written onto post its and stuck to a creation, piece of writing or similar to explain what has taken place during that child initiated learning. These physical examples of evidence are stuck into a paper learning journey for each child.

Floor books: Floor books are used to demonstrate the whole class learning journey taking place throughout the year. They are used to show whole class learning for maths, RE and important experiences that take place (special festivals, events, visitors and Forest School for example). They remain on display in the classroom where the children can see and comment on them daily.

Planning

Long Term Planning:

Our long term planning shows our aims and values, demonstrates how our continuous provision meets the EYFS requirements and promotes learning within the areas of learning and development, tracks the learning objectives that have been covered and highlights any key events to be included.

Medium Term Planning:

Our medium term planning shows the key learning experiences for each of the areas of the curriculum over that term. Every half term we follow a new topic which helps to guide the learning experiences. The key purpose of the medium term plan is to show the key skills, essential teacher subject knowledge, key hooks/ vehicles used to guide the learning and the 'end point' of what we need the children to be able to understand and do at that point in the year.

Specific activities and focuses to ensure coverage of these key skills are subject to a large amount of change depending on the children's interests through the term.

Therefore, the medium term plan simply acts as a clear and concise map for coverage of the key skills required at that point in the year.

Short Term Planning:

Short term planning shows the learning opportunities that will be available over the week. It includes differentiated adult led experiences for all curriculum areas, as well as showing how the learning environment will be enhanced in response to the children's current interests and key skills focus.

Phonics:

Adult-led phonics sessions take place daily in EYFS. We follow the Letter and Sounds scheme supported by Bug Club which provides a whole range of games and activities to consolidate the learning in each phase.

At the beginning of the year these sessions are short (15 minutes) and progress into longer sessions as the children are able to concentrate for longer. Phonemes are introduced one at a time. During a session, the children will learn a new phoneme by enjoying and sharing books, taking part in speaking and listening activities, playing games, singing songs and reading and writing words that contain the phoneme. During these sessions we also teach 'tricky' words which are words that cannot be decoded phonetically.

We also immerse the children in phonics through our continuous provision with writing opportunities available in every area at all times. Games and activities are modelled to the children during adult led sessions and then placed into the continuous provision for the children to incorporate into their play.

Transition

Preschool to Reception:

The children in the cohort joining us that year come to school in the summer term for one session per week from May half term onwards. They start with a short session where parents are also invited in to see the learning environment and meet teachers. The children then stay for a short period, which gets longer each week and in the final week they stay for the morning session.

Transition meetings are held with each pre-school setting to ensure SEND needs are identified early, MyPlan and EHCP review meetings are attended by our SENCo and Class Teacher where possible in the summer term before the children start at school. The EYFS profiles are obtained from the pre-school settings during this transition and a Whiteshill Primary School transition booklet is sent out to settings so that we can gather consistent, relevant information from them.

Home visits or parent meetings in school are completed in the first week of the Autumn term for each child to give parents chance to ask questions and share more private information if needed.

The first two weeks in reception are part-time days to allow the children time to adjust to the school day. The first week, the children stay until lunchtime, the second week they stay until just after lunch and from week 3 they are in full-time.

Reception children meet their year 6 buddies during the summer term transition as well and these children then support them during the Autumn term to settle in to the routines of the school successfully and play with them during lunchtime.

Reception to Year 1:

A transition meeting is held between the Reception and Year 1 teacher and the EYFS completed profile is shared with the teacher for each child. MyPlan reviews are carried out at the end of the summer term and MyPlans for the September of Year 1 are completed at this point so that no time is lost for necessary intervention in the autumn term. The year 1 curriculum and classroom are designed to include more practical elements and choice and there is an outdoor area in the year 1 classroom, ensuring a smooth transition of environment for the children.

