Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Related policies:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

Contents

1. Aims 2
2. Learning & Development 2
3. Curriculum & Planning 3
4. Phonics 3
5. Provision & Learning through play 3
6. The Learning Environment 4
7. Forest School 4
8. Assessment 4
9. Parents as Partners 5

"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential."

Page 8 EYFS Statutory Framework 2026

1. Aims

Our Early Years curriculum centres around the four overarching principles of the EYFS and we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. We understand that each child is unique and value them as an individual, recognising that children develop and learn at different rates and in different ways.

At Windrush Thamesmead Primary School we aim to:

- 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, well-sequenced, curriculum that is ambitious for all and will set in place firm foundations and links for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- develop communication and language skills through high-quality interactions between adults and children and with explicit teaching of new and ambitious vocabulary.
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence, resilience and self confidence
- work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions
- ensure that the needs of all children are met, 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

2. Learning & Development

Our whole school policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school.

Within the Foundation Stage practitioners use the educational programmes detailed in the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* as the basis for building our curriculum alongside the non-statutory guidance in *Development Matters.*

There are seven areas of learning and development within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Three of these are prime areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and Language (C&L)
- Physical Development (PD)

Four of these are specific areas:

- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- Understanding the World (UW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

For Nursery children and initially (settling in week) for those joining our Reception classes with little pre-school experience emphasis is placed on developing the skills within the three prime area of the curriculum. As pupils grow in confidence and ability within the prime areas the balance moves towards a more equal focus of all curriculum areas.

These seven areas are equally important in order to promote the development of the 'whole child'. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities using both our indoor and outdoor areas of the classroom.

3. Curriculum & Planning

Our curriculum is rooted in our agreed knowledge and skills that our pupils need to gain during their time in EYFS so that they are prepared for their next stage of education. Both the Nursery and Reception curriculums are well planned and sequenced with an emphasis on communication and language development to ensure that pupils can build on prior learning when developing their knowledge and skills. As a team we have a clear understanding of the end points for children in both Nursery and Reception and work to deliver an engaging and ambitious curriculum that will give every pupil the best chance to succeed.

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Class teams (Teachers and support staff) use their knowledge of the children, their backgrounds, interests, skills and next steps to support planning. We value all of our pupil's life experiences and through school trips and visitors in school ensure that we enhance the experience and opportunities available to them all.

Planning for the outdoor area is equally important as planning for the indoor area and it is expected that both areas will reflect a range of activities from the whole curriculum with children targeted to both the indoor and outdoor activities.

4. Phonics

At Windrush Thamesmead we teach phonics and application of reading following *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a validated systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery using the ***Foundation for Phonics*** programme and in Reception and follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression*, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

5. Provision & Learning through play

"Children learn by leading their own play and taking part in play that is guided by adults". Early Years Statutory Framework pg 17.

We support children's learning through planned play activities, which include child-initiated and adult-led play activities that provide the most effective learning opportunities. Provision in class is engaging, reflecting the planned activities and children's own interests. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, so adults will be seen playing alongside children, leading play where appropriate and using high-quality interactions/scaffolding and modelling talk to support communication and language development. Children are also encouraged to become independent learners and to take

some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

6. The Learning Environment

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experiences. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence.

The learning environment in both areas is split into a variety of different areas: such as, role play, book corner, writing area, maths, creative, malleable play, construction and small world. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment.

7. Forest School

All children in Foundation Stage attend Forest School. Forest School supports every child's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable. It also provides children the opportunity to explore and learn at their own pace. Every area of development, including physical, cognitive, linguistic, spiritual, social and emotional will be experienced at Forest School.

8. Assessment

"Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners understanding children's interests, what they know and can do, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge." EYFS Statutory Framework 2026 pg 19

Observations and knowing what pupils can do, and what they need to develop next are an integral part of the Foundation Stage. For short observations (wow moments) we use the *Evidence Me* programme via apps on class Ipads. These observations are used by the Class Teacher as part of identifying gaps in a child's learning; these will then be shared with the class team and planned for in future learning.

Each child in the Foundation Stage is allocated a Key Worker, in Nursery this will be either the Teacher or EYP. In Reception this is usually the Class Teacher.

All staff understand and agree that the completing of observations does not entail prolonged breaks from working with and interacting with children.

Summative assessments are made four times a year in EYFS. During the Autumn Term teachers in EYFS will use evidence in the initial observations of their pupils to support their own judgements as to whether a pupil is working at age expectation or below for a child starting Nursery or Reception. For children in Reception teachers will also administer the *Reception Baseline Assessment* and the school Speech and Language Therapist will complete the *Wellcomm* speech and language assessment.

Summative assessments then continue to be made at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms with Reception teachers reporting the EYFSP assessment to the LA in June. Teachers use the "children will be learning to" statements in *Development Matters* to support this summative assessment.

For Phonics Reception pupils are assessed each half term using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds* assessment procedures.

In line with KS1 and 2 Foundation Stage teachers meet with parents formally twice a year (October and March) to discuss pupil progress. Achievements made by children are shared immediately either at home

time, or via a postcard/commendation. Equally concerns are aired as soon as they arise through additional parent/ teacher meetings.

9. Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that parents make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our Early Years through Nursery home visits and Reception play sessions.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teachers about any concerns they may have.
- Inviting parents to regular workshops to support their child's learning at home and give information about learning in school.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, nursery/school and parents. For example, stay and play sessions, Christmas Nativities as well as assemblies
- Formal meetings held in the Autumn and Spring term with parents to discuss each child's progress and development against the EYFS profile.