



WEST WITNEY PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

Early Years Policy

January 2022

Signed N Darby Headteacher

Signed L Upson On behalf of the FGB

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Early Years Policy

Introduction

At West Witney Primary School & Nursery we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development and as preparation for life. All children begin at West Witney with a variety of experiences and learning and have already learnt a great deal. It is essential that the practitioners working in the Foundation Stage build upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through ensuring that parents/carers, support staff and the early years practitioners work together effectively to support children's learning and development; parents as partners. This is achieved by the sharing of information from parents/carers and any previous educational settings, ensuring that each child's learning is a continuous journey.

The Early Years Foundation Stage seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- **a secure foundation** through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

Aims

At West Witney Primary School & nursery the aim of the Early Years department is to help young children reach their Early Learning Goals in both the prime and specific areas. The EYFS principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

A Unique Child - every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships - Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. Positive Relationships are:

- Warm and loving, and foster a sense of belonging.
- Sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests.
- Supportive of the child's own efforts and independence.

- Consistent in setting clear boundaries.
- Stimulating environment.
- Ambitious curriculum.

Enabling Environments - 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 carers. They have enabling environments that value all people and learning. They offer stimulating resources, relevant to all the children's cultures and communities, rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching and offer support for children to take risks and explore.

Learning and Development - Teaching staff teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development. They recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

At West Witney Primary School & Nursery we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating and caring 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 future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play and activities in all areas of learning and development.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress to their 'next step'.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions.
- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

Learning and Development

Development matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Prime Areas are:

- Personal, social & emotional development.
- Physical development.

- Communication & Language.

The Specific Areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts & Design

At West Witney Primary School & Nursery we believe these areas are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. We aim to deliver all the areas through both spontaneous and planned for activities with purposeful play at the heart of what we do including a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

The above Areas of Learning are all underpinned by The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and 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.

We look for these characteristics in children's play e.g. persevering, making links and being willing to try new things. These tie in with the school values and the Growth Mindset approach adopted by the rest of the school.

Staffing and Organisation

West Witney Primary School Foundation Stage is divided into Nursery (3-4 year olds) and Reception (4-5 year olds).

Nursery:

We have one nursery class (Ducklings) which provides both part time (15 hours), full time (30 hours) and the flexibility to add lunch or afternoon to part time. There are 40 places available in the setting. The nursery children attend 5 mornings a week 8.30-11.30. They can add on lunch (11.30-12.30) or stay for the whole day (8.30-3.15). Parents can select what works for their child termly.

The nursery is based in a purpose-built building that allows for great opportunities both indoors and out. It is spread over 2 rooms allowing the children to move between throughout the day, with free flow access to the outdoors all day. It is a well-staffed unit led with one full time teacher and between 3 and 5 teaching assistants, depending on numbers. The Nursery have access to all of the school facilities and

regularly use the hall for P.E and join in with whole school events. Lunch is eaten in the dining hall with Reception.

Reception:

We have two reception classes; Hedgehogs and Squirrels, which provide full time hours (8.45am - 3.10pm) and there are 60 places available in the setting.

The Reception classes are based in the main school with sliding doors allowing for free-flow between each class and the well-developed outdoor area. It is well staffed with a full-time teacher and teaching assistant in each class, as well as one additional, FTE, teaching assistant, to provide the necessary interventions such as Lego therapy, one to one speech and language interventions, small group phonics and maths booster sessions and communication and language groups, such as NELI.

The Foundation Stage Lead liaises with the Nursery Manager, class teachers and teaching assistants, regularly involving them in planning, preparation, assessment and steering of the department. There are opportunities for sharing best practice, feeding back from courses and celebrating success stories. Staff meet regularly with Nursery and KS1 to engage in training that is relevant for both departments to ensure continuity for children.

Assessment

Formative Assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on ongoing observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles.

In Nursery, formative assessment may take the form of focused observations or assessment on entry (baseline). WOW moments (evidence of what children can do independently) are recorded and photographed and included in children's learning journey on "Evidence Me". These will be used to track child's learning journey and record of their time in Nursery as well as useful transition tool to Reception.

In Reception, formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations recorded on class assessment sheets, assessment on entry, other focused assessments e.g. focus children observations. Annotated examples of work, children's comments and photographs are gathered together in each child's 'Special Book'. These will be used to track child's learning journey and record of their time in Foundation Stage as well as a useful transition tool into Year 1. Each child has an individual assessment profile on "Evidence Me" (an assessment app) which is updated regularly. They also have a writing books which captures a wide array of written work and mark making from September through to July, a fantastic piece of evidence to show the progress they have made both physically and in literacy.

In both Nursery and Reception we have adopted a 'focus child' approach to formative assessment. This is based on Anna Ephgrave's 'Planning in the Moment' theory which encourages a more holistic and personalised approach to capturing a child's stage of development. Each child has a week, in each long term where they are the 'focus child', parents are asked to complete a document, asking them about their child's interests and development needs; this is used to plan and provide opportunities for assessment. All week the child is observed and assessed, we then meet with the parents/carers at the end of the week where we share what we have observed and discuss their child's next steps.

Summative Assessment

The assessment profile summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements. This is recorded on a spreadsheet in terms 1 (baseline), 2, 4 and 6. It summarises children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. All practitioners in the Foundation Stage contribute to the profile and the teacher attends the local cluster group moderation.

For further information see the school's Assessment Policy.

The Headteacher monitors teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. The Foundation Lead and Nursery Manager analyse their data with the Headteacher at data review points. These analyses will be used to identify any children causing concern and those that need to be challenged which will then be targeted and addressed within medium term planning and deployment of adult support.

Transition

At West Witney Primary School and Nursery:

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the Foundation Stage.
- Early Years practitioners plan for some more structured activities to be undertaken during the Summer Term, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- The children meet their new teachers throughout Term 6, allowing them to build new relationships.
- Parent information evenings are held on entry to each year; Nursery, Reception and Year one.
- Forest School is offered from Nursery to Year 6, and encourages both independence and perseverance.
- For children with additional needs, extra transition opportunities are provided for both the child and their parents.

Nursery to Reception

The Nursery staff ensure children come and visit the Reception classes throughout the year. They will also join in with relevant FS/KS1 assemblies and visitors.

Throughout Term 5 and 6 the Nursery children will join for some free-flow sessions.

The children will spend a morning with their new teacher in Term 6 and the Nursery teacher will handover and discuss individual needs with the Reception teacher.

Reception to Year 1

Reception and Year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

- Individual *Special Books* are passed on to Year 1 teachers
- Class summary sheet and assessment records are passed on to Year 1 teachers
- Foundation Stage and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July
- Reception children visit their new Year 1 class for a few sessions before September
- The curriculum across Key Stage 1 is taught through continuous provision

Home/School Links

At West Witney Primary School and Nursery we recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- The use of the Class Dojo app that enables parents a window into the classroom, sharing videos and photos of learning at school. The messaging function allows them to post from home and allow us to share and celebrate with them.
- Outlining the Foundation Stage curriculum to parents/carers during the new parents meeting on entry, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come in and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- Inviting parents/carers to help in our school and to accompany children on school visits.
- Encouraging Reception parents/carers to listen to their child read regularly and to comment on reading progress on GoRead.
- Encouraging Nursery parents/ carers to read with their child regularly by offering a lending library (books can be changed daily) and a key text book chosen by the teacher is sent home weekly.

- Discussing individual targets with parents/carers, following their child's Focus Week.
- Additional parent meetings for those children with SEND, to discuss their Pupil Profile.
- Additional parent meetings available for vulnerable or pupil premium children.
- Providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July, summarising the child's progress across the curriculum.

Equal Opportunities

At West Witney Primary School and Nursery we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual.

Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

For further information see the school's Equality Policy.

Inclusion of children with special educational needs and disabilities will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special medical needs, thus increasing the adult/pupil ratio.

Pupil Profiles identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. Foundation Stage teachers discuss these targets with the child and his/her parents/carers. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term. The school's SEND Co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

For further information see the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.