



Early Years Policy

Date of last review: 5 November 2019

Date of next review: November 2020

Reviewed by: Jayne Staves

This policy will be reviewed sooner if there is a change to legislation or guidance which may affect it.

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims and principles of all involved with Whitecross Nursery School. We follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (April 2017) and use the guidance (2012) to work towards the Early Learning Goals in the seven areas of learning.

Mission statement

'Your Child, Our Inspiration'

Vision

'We are committed to providing a nurturing, stimulating environment which empowers each child to realise their potential'

Values

As a school we value

- the happiness of children, families and staff
- caring staff who respect and know the children very well
- the development of self-confidence, self-motivation and independence
- co-operation, collaboration and teamwork
- exciting but safe and secure spaces indoor and out, where children can explore, discover and experiment
- the natural environment, the local community and the wider world

- a stimulating and challenging play-based curriculum suited to children's needs, enabling them to reach their full potential across all areas of learning
- praise and celebration of the achievements of every child
- raising aspirations and a commitment to lifelong learning
- working in partnership with others to meet the needs of all the children and their families

These values are made clear to our parents and prospective families through our website, prospectus and new intake meetings for parents.

Statutory Requirements

In the Foundation Stage children should be given opportunities to

- learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults
- develop through warm, positive interactions with practitioners

“Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others.”

Practitioners are required to reflect on the different ways that children learn and to keep in mind the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

The seven areas of learning and development are all important and interconnected. The three prime areas are

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication and language
- physical development

These prime areas underpin learning in the four specific areas

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Further information about the three prime and four specific areas of learning and development can be found in the EYFS framework at www.early-education.org.uk

When working towards the Early Learning Goals in these seven areas we keep in mind the following principles set out in the EYFS guidance.

A Unique child

Every child is an individual with unique early learning experiences and specific needs. Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.

Children's attitudes to learning are influenced by others; we use praise and encouragement to support children to develop a positive attitude towards learning and to develop self-esteem and confidence. We give all our children every opportunity to achieve their best.

(Links to Equality Policy, Supporting Children with EAL Policy, Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy, Behaviour Policy, First Aid Policy (including administration of medicines) and Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy)

Enabling environments

Children have very different learning styles and we work towards meeting these by allowing children to free flow between the indoor and outdoor environments. We have well-established areas of continuous provision both indoors and out and the resources are organised to enable children to follow their own interests and become independent learners. Children need to have some control over their learning in order to develop confidence and learn to make decisions.

We encourage interest in the natural environment and the local community through 'Forest School' sessions and by taking the children on walks throughout the year.

(Links to Risk Assessment Policy and Off-site Visit Policy)

Positive relationships

We develop good relationships with our families and the local community, operating an open-door policy and speaking to children and their carers at the beginning and end of each day.

Our key person system enables each family to develop a close relationship with a particular member of staff, but all practitioners build relationships with all the children. Parents are invited to stay and support their children as they settle in and to share their valuable knowledge of their child's development through 'Voice of Parent/Child' sheets and informal discussions with staff members. They are able to find out about their child's interests through the year and to make their own contributions to their 'Learning Journey' by logging onto 'Tapestry' and are given an opportunity to meet with their child's key person once a term to discuss their learning and development. Family members are also invited in to spend time with their children / grandchildren for special occasions and celebrations.

Staffing ratios are in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017'.

We have good relationships with other agencies including Speech and Language and Educational Psychology Services.

Our links with local schools are good and we have a well-established transition procedure with practitioners from school visiting the children at Whitecross and staff from here accompanying children on visits to their new schools.

(Links to Personal, Social, Health, Education and Citizenship Policy, Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Safer Recruitment Policy)

Learning and Development

We aim to provide learning experiences through play which reflect our children's personal interests and encourage their natural desire, excitement and motivation to learn.

We provide experiences which build on their existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development. We play alongside and interact with them, modelling good communication skills, showing genuine interest and asking open questions to support them to clarify their thinking and help them make connections to further their understanding.

All children access a range of child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-led activities during each session. Children have opportunities to consolidate their learning by revisiting and reviewing activities.

Two members of staff had the opportunity to visit Italy to find out about the Reggio Emilia approach to early education and this both consolidated and has had further impact on our practice in the way we listen to and value our children's independent learning.

We offer our parents insights into specific areas of provision for their children through our workshops on Literacy and Mathematics.

More information about the teaching of Literacy and Mathematics and ideas for parents to use with their children at home can be found on our website.

(Link to International Policy, Physical Development Policy, Literacy Policy and Maths Policy)

Planning and Assessment

Staff work together to plan, deliver and moderate learning and teaching to ensure that expectations are high and children are able to achieve to the best of their ability.

All practitioners observe children at play, noting their particular interests and capturing significant learning; we then meet together to evaluate our observations and plan enhancements to promote further learning.

We also introduce provocations around festivals and special occasions to ignite children's interest. Visitors come in to inspire children through drama, music and more specific outdoor experiences.

Families are kept informed of current interests and learning taking place through the display of weekly enhancements and adult-led group activities in Nursery, their child's online 'Learning Journey', the Nursery website and termly newsletters.

We give verbal feedback to individual and to small groups of children during and on completion of activities. Adult-led group activities are evaluated weekly and these evaluations are used to move on children's individual learning.

Key persons keep records of children's learning and development and formative assessments are carried out and then moderated by the whole staff team on a termly basis to review children's progress and shape future experiences.

A summative assessment is presented in a written report which is given to parents and sent to schools.

(Link to Data Protection Policy)

Safeguarding and Welfare requirements

"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 take all necessary steps to keep the children in our care safe and well. We follow the Government's statutory guidance outlined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children – updated Feb 2019', 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales – updated April 2019' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education – updated Oct 2019'.

Both the head teacher and lead teacher attend bi-annual safeguarding and child protection training and all other staff attend Child Protection training every three years. The head teacher regularly updates all members of staff on safeguarding issues.

(Link to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Photography and Mobile Phone Policy)

Health and Safety

The good health of all children in our care is very important to us. Children are encouraged to be active physically and to spend extended periods of time in the outdoor environment every day.

(Link to Food and Drink Policy, Physical Development Policy, First Aid Policy, Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Fire Safety Policy and Fire Drills Procedure, Smoking Policy, Off-site Visit Policy, Risk Assessment Policy)

Inclusion/SEND

We value all children as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan to meet the needs of the individual child and to support them at their own pace. We follow the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice; there is a named SENDCO and two SEND TAs responsible for those children with additional needs.

(Link to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy)

Continuing Professional Development of Staff

Members of the Senior Leadership Team provide groups of staff with training related to their needs during staff meetings and INSET days. They also have access to a variety of training sessions at the local Hub, which enable them to meet with colleagues from other schools as well as update their knowledge relating to specific areas. Other opportunities are available for CPD through courses further afield and visits to other settings in relation to the individual needs of staff and to the school improvement plan.

All members of staff are encouraged and supported to keep up to date with new initiatives and to further develop their own expertise in particular areas of interest.

All staff receive training in Paediatric First Aid. A list of those members of staff who hold current PFA certificates can be found in the Nursery entrance.

(Link to School Development Plan)

Role of Governors

Governors are kept up to date with the teaching and learning taking place through presentations during meetings of the Standards Committee and through the Head Teacher's report to Governors. The progress and attainment data for the previous year's cohort of children is shared with Governors and, as a result, priorities for school improvement are agreed.

All Governors visit the school at least twice per year to monitor their designated area (Safeguarding, Health and Safety and SEND) and progress towards targets identified on the School Development Plan. They look at the physical and emotional environments and

observe adults working alongside children and teaching small groups. They also support staff to take the children on trips into the local environment.

Governors support the development and reviewing of policies and risk assessments on a regular basis.

The governing body has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for ensuring that it does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability.

(Link to Governor Monitoring Visits Policy and Governor Visits to School Protocol)

A copy of this policy is available on the website or as a hard copy from the school office for parents who wish to see it.