

# West Felton C of E Primary School



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



*Within each tiny Acorn there lies the potential for a mighty Oak to thrive and grow.*

*“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.”*

(DfE Early Years Statutory Guidance Dec 2023- Pg7)

### **What is the Early Years Foundation Stage and why is it so important?**

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year (5 Years of age). At West Felton School we cater for children from the age of 2 to 5, however, we are greatly aware that each small development in a child's life prior to this time is of paramount importance. The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is the expected level of development of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It recognises every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- It recognises that children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- It recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.
- It provides a secure, caring, challenging, stimulating and enabling environment in which there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- It ensures that learning is fun and children enjoy coming to school and continue to be enthusiastic and engaged learners.

### **The Foundation stage curriculum**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum encompasses 7 areas of development. These consist of 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas. The holistic nature of child development means that development in one area of learning is

unlikely to occur in isolation. Secure development in the ‘prime’ areas will underpin and promote development in the ‘specific’ areas. As a result, the curriculum and activities in the nursery and reception class reflect this and aim to promote development in many areas of the curriculum and the holistic development of each child.

	<b>Areas of Learning ↓</b>	<b>Early Learning Goal strands ↓</b>
<b>Prime areas →</b>	<b>Communication and Language</b>	Listening and Attention and Understanding
		Speaking
	<b>Physical Development</b>	Gross motor skills
		Fine motor skills
	<b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b>	Self-regulation
		Managing Self
Building relationships		
<b>Specific areas →</b>	<b>Literacy</b>	Comprehension
		Word reading
		Writing
	<b>Mathematics</b>	Number
		Numerical patterns
	<b>Understanding the World</b>	Past and Present
		People, Culture and Communities
		The Natural World
	<b>Expressive Arts and Design</b>	Creating with materials
Being imaginative and Expressive		

At West Felton we place a particularly high emphasis on developing children’s language and communication skills.

*“The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language rich environment is crucial.”* DfE EYFS Statutory Framework Dec 2023 pg. 10.

In order to support children’s language development we observe and assess children’s use of language using a range of tools including a Communication Screening tool (Stoke Speaks out), British Picture Vocab scale and also TalkBoost). These tools help us to assess children’s level of language development and plan individually tailored activities to support children’s language to develop further. Most of our staff have received TalkBoost training allowing us to support children’s language development. We have established strong links with our local Speech and Language Therapy professionals.

*"Oral language development is a priority and a prerequisite for children to become confident early writers, Children have to be able to talk a message before they can write it; they need to be able to hold thoughts in their head and express them orally using increasingly complex grammatical constructions, and a wide functional and creative vocabulary". Cigman 2018 pg 10*

## **Curriculum Planning**

Planning takes place on three levels, long term, medium term and short term/ weekly and daily planning.

The long term plan details the intended coverage of possible topics throughout the year and a brief description of the intended areas of the curriculum to be covered. The long term plan also covers the possible learning outcomes for each area of the continuous provision that is delivered by our rich environment. Alongside our long term plans are our setting unique key goals, skills and experiences that we endeavour for all children to have acquired by the end of each stage of their time in the Early Years department.

Medium term planning is completed half termly and highlights which early learning goals the planned activities will work towards. Planned activities will usually promote development in more than one area of learning. During adult led and adult directed activities wherever possible the activities are play based allowing children to engage in hands on, meaningful learning experiences.

Short term plans are completed weekly and give in greater detail the activities to be covered and the groups of children and differentiation techniques to be employed to ensure all learning is at an appropriate level for each child. Short term planning is drawn up with reference to observations and assessments to help ensure the activities meet the needs of each child. Planning may at times be altered as a result of evaluation, reflection and observations throughout the teaching week to ensure it is flexible to meet the children's interests and needs.

All planning references the Early Learning Goals and 'Development Matters' as stated in the Statutory EYFS documentation.

## **The learning environment**

The learning environment for children in our Early Years Unit comprises of two demountable classroom bases, Acorn classroom and Catkins classroom with direct access to an outdoor area. The outdoor area consists of a grassed area and tarmacked area. The equipment in both the indoor and outdoor area is designed to promote development in all seven areas of learning.

Inside the classrooms there are designated areas to promote all areas of development, i.e.

- computer/ technology area.

- role play area.
- book corner
- sensory snug.
- exploration area
- creative area- offering opportunities for painting, collage, clay etc
- maths area.
- small world area.
- construction area
- malleable materials area.
- water area.
- baking area.
- mark making/writing area.
- carpet area for large group discussion and story acting sessions.
- interactive whiteboard.

Where possible resources within the learning environment are clearly labelled and easily accessible for children to promote independence.

The outdoor continuous provision primarily consists of:

- Grassed area.
- Hard core area.
- Water and sand area
- Large 'climb in' sandpit.
- Pet area containing our two rabbits Cliff and Daisy.
- Story tellers' seat/ reading area.
- Mud Kitchen area and insect habitat.
- Music area.
- Reclaimed materials modelling area.
- Digging and planting area.
- Mark making area.
- Painting area.
- Large outdoor construction resources.
- Large shed containing a range of wheeled vehicles.

We also have access to the wider school facilities, such as a Forest school area, field and indoor space for P.E sessions.

### **Staffing**

*'No job is more important than working with children in the early years'* DfE  
'Development Matters' Sept 2023

With this in mind we try to ensure we have dedicated, highly qualified staff who have a passion for working with children and supporting them to achieve their full potential.

In line with EYFS statutory requirements we ensure the minimum adult/ child ratio's for our children is always met. This equates to 1 adult to every 5 children who are aged 2 and 1 adult for every 13 of our 3 or 4 year old nursery children. (1: 8 when a teacher is not present). We also acknowledge that children's learning opportunities are greatly increased by adequate support and scaffolding from well qualified, experienced staff so where possible we work with higher ratios of staff: children.

Within the Early Years Unit we currently have 1 EYFS teacher with nearly 20 years Early Years teaching experience. The Early Years team also consists of 7 teaching assistants. 4 members of staff hold Level 3 qualifications, 2 are further qualified as HLTAs (Level 4 equivalent). Further members of staff are actively working towards further qualifications. We also regularly support those on college placements working towards childcare qualifications.

Where possible children are grouped into key worker groups to allow them to have consistent contact with the same member of staff for each session. This helps staff to build in depth positive relationships with their key worker children and their families.

### **Play and child-initiated learning.**

Play is integral and vital to a child's development. When a child is at play they are instinctively learning and discovering aspects concerning themselves, others and the environment they find themselves in. In essence children learn through play.

“Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults.” DfE EYFS Statutory Framework Dec 2023 pg.

Consequently, the value of good quality play opportunities should be paramount in the early year's curriculum.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. Children have the opportunity to engage in play-based activities daily. This may be in the form of planned play-based activities with an intended learning outcome or it may take place in the form of unplanned play which is supported and enhanced by the support of responsive and supportive staff.

*"The academic skills that children learn through play become the foundation for learning future skills, and foster learning dispositions that enhance children's learning through to adulthood"* Cigmen 2018

## **Special Educational Needs (SEND) and Inclusion**

Through regular observations and assessments, the staff identify any children who we feel may benefit from additional support to make progress at the expected level for their age. The children are monitored and where appropriate a plan of intervention is drawn up which details the support the child will receive which is above and beyond that provided to the rest of the children. Short term planning identifies where the needs of children with SEN are being met through differentiation. Where required the support of additional outside agencies is sought via a referral process, for example, Speech and Language therapy, physiotherapists, educational psychologists etc. Individual Learning plans (Pupil Passports)/ PCPs are written for children requiring additional support and are regularly reviewed by the staff with parental contributions. EYFS staff liaise effectively with our SENDCo, Mrs Creaser-Ogden.

## **Equal opportunities.**

At West Felton Primary school we believe that all children, regardless of gender, race, faith or ability should have access to all areas of a rich, stimulating and fulfilling curriculum. Teaching and resources actively challenges stereotypes and promotes equal opportunities for all.

## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting.**

Assessments are conducted throughout each term. These include

- Timed observations of children during child-initiated activities.
- Assessments of incidental observations.
- Assessments gathered from small group adult led activities.
- Discussions between staff and noting of significant observations.
- Discussions between staff and parents/ carers.
- More formal assessments using RBA, Communication Screen, PUMA, PERA,

PIRA, and BPVS

Much of the assessment and observations are recorded on each child's electronic learning journal 'Seesaw', which parents can view and access electronically from home.

Each child has an Early Years Foundation Stage profile (EYFSP) which is updated at least every half term. After entering our setting a 'baseline' assessment is completed once children are settled. This draws upon information from pre-school settings, discussions with parents and observations of children within the first few weeks of school. This 'baseline' helps to build a picture of a child's current level of development and identifies the next steps for each child to be incorporated into planning. All staff within the EYFS unit contribute towards observations and assessments of the children, with Key workers contributing to each of their key

children's profiles with the class teacher overseeing and quality assuring these judgements.

The assessment information gathered is then fed into planning to ensure future activities build upon what the children already know and promotes further progression.

Parents meet formally with staff at a parent's evening in both the Autumn and Spring terms. Parents receive a full written report at the end of the summer term alongside a summary of the child's level of development in relation to the 17 Early Learning Goals (Reception children). In addition to this staff are always available to discuss with a parent if they ever have any concerns or questions regarding their child's development. Parents of two year olds are also invited to a meeting to conduct their child's 'Two Year old check'. This coincides with and complements the Two Year old check conducted by Health visitors.

Foundation stage profile scores for each Reception child are submitted to the Local Authority at the end of June. We engage in regular moderation activities with teaching staff across our Federation schools and also in wider cluster groups.

The profiles are then passed onto the child's Year 1 teacher and an in-depth professional dialogue enables Year 1 staff to understand each child's strengths and next steps.

There are 17 Early Learning Goals in total which stipulate the 'expected' level of achievement for a typical Reception aged child. At the end of the Reception year a judgement is made as to whether children have demonstrated they are at the '**expected**' level of development and have achieved the Early Learning Goal, or whether they are still working towards the Early Learning goal ('**Emerging**').

At the end of the year parents will receive a report stating whether their child is 'emerging' or 'expected' in relation to each of the 17 Early Learning Goals. If children are judged to be at the expected level or exceeding in the first 12 ELG's they are deemed to have reached a good level of development (GLD).

### **Parents as partners.**

We value the role of parents highly. Parents know the strengths of their children better than anyone else. During the initial open evening new parents are given the opportunity to share with staff any information about their child, i.e. strengths, weaknesses, likes/ dislikes etc.

Parents can access children's electronic 'Seesaw' journal from home and view children's' learning and observations. Parents can add comments upon the learning evidenced on 'Seesaw' and can also upload and share achievements of their child from home.

We operate an open-door policy which means parents have the opportunity to talk to staff each morning or following school if they wish. This also provides opportunities for two-way discussion between staff and parents. Parents also have access to a list of relevant websites they may wish to use with their children in order to further support their learning.

See also the 'Home school agreement' policy.  
See also 'EYFS Unit Welcome pack for Parents'.

### **Admissions and transition procedures.**

The majority of the children who enter our Reception class have previously attended our Nursery provision. Staff from West Felton EYFS endeavour to work closely together with children attending from other settings to ensure a smooth transition for the children as move between settings. Children from other settings are invited formally to spend time in the Reception class prior to their full-time admission. This is usually in the form of at least one morning, one afternoon session and one full day during the late summer term, but often many more sessions are offered to meet the needs of individual children.

Parents are invited to an information evening where staff and parents have the opportunity to discuss typical procedures within the reception class and receive an information pack.

Following the end of the Reception year the children move into Year 1 which is usually in Oak class. During the summer term the children have extensive opportunities to join Oak class for a range of activities in order to prepare children for this transition. The Reception staff also meet with Year 1 teaching staff to discuss children's strengths and areas for development.

Children joining our Nursery provision are invited to attend a settling in mornings or afternoons, with a parent if they wish. We then gradually increase the child's attendance until they have settled well.

It is our believe that children's emotional well being is paramount. If children are happy and settled they are likely to flourish. Happy children = Happy learners.

### **Child welfare / Safeguarding**

*"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them." Pg 23 Dfe EYFS Statutory Guidance Dec 23*

In line with EYFS requirements all staff teaching the children within our Early Years Unit have suitable Paediatric first aid training which is renewed regularly (at least every 3 years). Staff also have additional Asthma and Anaphylaxis training.

Where a child requires medication i.e. inhalers, this is stored safely in a first aid cupboard. Parents are required to provide medication that is clearly labelled and accompany this with a signed medicine form. When administering medicine staff

document this clearly on our medicine forms, stating the dosage, time and any reactions.

#### Intimate care

Where possible intimate care is provided to children by their key worker, or where this is not possible a member of staff well known to them to ensure that the child feels comfortable. Details of each nappy change/ intimate care procedure is logged on our nappy log file.

All staff have had adequate safeguarding training and are aware of and have read the relevant parts of the latest KCSIE documentation. Where a member of staff feels a child is in a vulnerable situation or they are concerned about a child they liaise concerns with the members of staff designated for Child protection. Staff can also seek support from the wider staff, namely our Head teacher, Mrs Helen Hughes. Concerns are documented and shared with relevant staff via our secure CPOMs system.

Electronic devices- Staff personal mobile phones/ devices are stored away from children in staff only areas. Within the EYFS department staff only use school issued iPads/ devices to capture images of children as part of Seesaw observations. Images are shared with parents via Seesaw in accordance with GDPR regulations and where parental permissions have been sought.

See also: Safeguarding policy

Policy updated: December 2023 - S.Miller - EYFS Lead

Policy to be reviewed – December 2024