



Early Years Policy

Date adopted by Governors:	18 October 2022
Date for policy review:	October 2024
Person responsible for review:	EYFS Leader
Signed by Chair of Governors	SSC

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

2. Aims

3. Equal Opportunities

4. Organisation

(Relates to planning, assessment, teaching styles, induction, home school links and transition to Year One)

5. Monitoring

INTRODUCTION

“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.”

Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Woodloes Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for the future learning and development and as preparation for life.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception Year.

Young children will have had a wide range of different experiences and possess a wide range of skills and interests when they join our school. All children require a well-planned, well-organised curriculum in order to move their learning forward. The Foundation Stage provides opportunities for all children to succeed in an atmosphere of care and where every child is valued. Ideally, all pupils should achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage and be properly prepared for experiencing and accessing the National Curriculum when they enter Key Stage 1. This policy sets out the entitlement of our youngest children.

AIMS

The overall aim of the EYFS is to ensure that each child achieves a good level of development by the time they leave reception. It is every child’s right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being.

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 resilient and independent through positive relationships.

Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and

help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

At Woodloes Primary School we aim to support children to achieve the above principles by:

- providing a safe, challenging, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- providing a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning in Key Stage One and beyond
- providing opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- valuing each child as an individual through praise, encouragement and assessing their individual needs enabling them to make progress
- enabling choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence
- working in partnership with parents / carers and valuing their contributions
- ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family backgrounds, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable early years curriculum

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

At Woodloes, we value every child. We seek to provide a rich and relevant curriculum for all pupils, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability etc. The curriculum taught will prepare our children to become full and active citizens in an ethnically and culturally diverse society. The curriculum seeks to challenge stereotypes based on gender, race or ability and provides equal access and educational outcomes for all pupils.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage will be in accordance with the present policy for Equal Opportunities. We therefore 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. As role models, practitioners are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. The classroom environment and resources for the Foundation Stage reflect children's varied home and community experiences as far as possible and attempt to avoid gender stereo-typing.

PLANNING

Our planning for learning is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and is as far as possible cross-curricular, story based, and often led by the children's own ideas and interests. Planning for learning focuses on **the seven areas of learning**:

The Prime Areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional development
- Physical development
- Communication and Language

The Specific Areas

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

At Woodloes Primary School we believe that all seven 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 planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

A cycle of themes (2 per term) is followed to ensure continuity, progression and full coverage of the Early Learning Goals.

A menu of activities, organised for foundation stage children, is set out below:

- Registration and visual timetable of activities for the day
- Maths with meaning. Daily opportunities to discuss the calendar and to practise and consolidate maths skills.
- Jolly Phonics adult led carpet session and handwriting in small groups
- Choosing time; time for the children to access continuous provision and enhanced provision activities led by children's interests and linked to the EYFS Curriculum.
- Physical Education session twice a week.
- Whole class music sessions
- Access to provision, inside and outside
- Whole class Forest School sessions

The Early Years staff are highly skilled and work together with different ratio groups to support the learning process. Teaching Assistants may lead activities under the direction of the class teacher.

ORGANISATION

Children develop rapidly during the early years; physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. This is a crucial time in children's development and they deserve provision which supports and extends their knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence.

The Foundation Stage builds on what pupils already know, understand and can do. To be fully effective the curriculum, is carefully planned and structured. The structure of our curriculum is built on the following strands:

- Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, and Creating and Thinking Critically support children's learning across all areas
- a well-planned and stimulating environment with appropriate resources
- provision for different starting points as children arrive with different experiences and from different settings
- relevant and appropriate content that matches pupils' needs
- planned and purposeful activities that provide opportunities for learning (indoors and outdoors)
- adult-planned and pupil-initiated activities
- time available for children to become engrossed in their activities
- planning includes time for practitioners to observe children during activities and tasks in order to plan effectively for the 'next steps'
- early years practitioners 'plan in the moment' to help develop pupils' knowledge, skills, understanding, attitudes and behaviour
- use of external visitors or trips to enhance children's learning and understanding
- use of technology promotes learning where appropriate
- care and support for all pupils is inclusive

ASSESSMENT

At Woodloes Primary School we undertake Assessment for Learning (AFL). We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and

then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet a child's development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process:

- The National Baseline Assessment is completed within the first six weeks of a child entering the Reception class
- Progress is monitored closely and reported to SLT three times in the year
- Staff's professional judgements contribute to ongoing assessment
- Observations and judgements are made of each child's learning journey, progress and development
- Progress is recorded in books. Phonics and Mark Making books capture progress which is shared with parents at parent consultation meetings. Weekly 'wow' moments are shared with parents via Evidence Me. Parents can also share moments from home using the same facility.
- Informal discussions with children, marking and individual target setting and comments on work contribute to assessment
- Good Levels of Development (GLD) are recorded with the local authority as a summative assessment

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

Play in the Foundation Stage:

Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, helping them to make sense of the world around them. When involved in play, children develop, practice and gather ideas and concepts, they learn about sharing, self-control, collaboration and the need for rules. Play offers children opportunities to communicate, think creatively, problem-solve and investigate with others, as well as on their own. During play children explore and experiment as well as develop their senses. Structured play enables children to express worries and fears and re-live them in a controlled, safe situation and environment. The importance of play cannot be overestimated.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage Setting, we do not make a distinction between formal learning and play. We support children's development through our play-based curriculum and balance child-led learning with adult-led play activities to provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play and have meaningful conversations with our children to develop communication skills. Planning 'in the moment' and open questioning develop children's' deeper thinking and problem solving skills.

Learning Outdoors:

Great emphasis is placed on ensuring that the outdoor learning environment contributes to all areas of learning and therefore our Foundation Stage children have equal access to both indoor and outdoor learning environments. We recognise the

need for opportunities for gross motor activities which enable children to develop both physically and emotionally.

INDUCTION

At Woodloes Primary School we believe that it is important for children to feel welcomed and secure in their new environment so that their learning journey can continue.

Smooth transitions are important for the parents / carers as well as the children. We support children and families in the following ways:

- Prospective parents / carers are welcome to visit the school at any time. The school also organises open days during the autumn term prior to the start of a new academic year
- The EYFS team make contact with pre-school providers during the summer term
- A new parent meeting is held during the summer term to share information including the school's expectations and routines and details of the induction process. Parents/ carers have the opportunity to meet EYFS staff and to visit the Reception classroom
- During the months of June and July, pre-school children visit the Reception classroom for "stay and play" sessions with their parents / carers
- Prior to the children starting in Reception, the EYFS team will offer home visits to all children / families
- Children begin school on a part-time basis. This allows for a gradual introduction to school and enables practitioners to get to know the children individually and the opportunity to establish quality relationships

HOME/SCHOOL LINKS

Parents and carers have a crucial role in the education of their children and we develop positive, constructive relationships with our parents and carers. We establish this strong partnership by offering:

- information evenings for children, parents and carers and inviting families to join school events prior to their child starting school
- induction sessions for Foundation Stage pupils
- an "open door" policy, whereby parents / carers can discuss their child in an informal manner

- termly 'stay and play' sessions enabling parents to come into the classroom and play with their child
- formal consultation meetings with parents and carers about their child's development and progress
- a curriculum information evening following induction and regular email updates
- weekly achievement assemblies in the spring and summer term when children are rewarded and have opportunities celebrate their achievements

TRANSITION INTO KS1

Reception and Year One teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage One as smooth as possible.

At Woodloes Primary School:

- Children are encouraged to develop their independence when dressing and undressing and by organising their personal belongings throughout the Reception Year.
- During the summer term, we encourage less dependence on adult support by promoting problem solving
- Reception children meet Year One teachers throughout the year and have transition visits to their new classrooms
- EYFS individual profile sheets and assessment records are passed on to Year One teachers
- Reception and Year One teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children
- Reception children visit their new Year One class and teacher
- During the Autumn and Spring Term in Year One, elements of the EYFS are maintained for continuity as well as valuing the importance of a practical, play based curriculum
- In Year One, children are given choice in the activities they access. There are plenty of hands-on tasks and practical activities, as well as a role play area and use of an outdoor learning area

MONITORING

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored during the year through:

- Monitoring of teaching and learning by the Early Years Lead / SLT / Governors
- Visits from the inspectorate or advisory team

- Sampling of pupils' work
- Analysis of data to consider trends or other issues arising

The Role of the Early Years Foundation Stage Phase Leader is:

- to advise the Head Teacher of action required to develop the area
- to monitor the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum
- to develop and build upon the strong partnership with parents and carers in order to support the children's learning and development
- encourage staff to attend relevant training to support implementation of new initiatives
- to advise on the purchase, organisation and maintenance of teaching and learning resources
- to take a leading role in monitoring and evaluating the Foundation Stage provision, along with SLT