West Meadows Primary School Foundation Stage Policy

EDUCATE. EMPOWER. INSPIRE.

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1	Original	Sept 2023
2	Rebranded & reviewed	July 2024
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WCPS Foundation Stage Policy

Rationale

The Early Years Foundation stage curriculum at West Meadows Primary school aims to build on what children already know and can do, ensures that no child is excluded, or disadvantaged, provides a rich and stimulating environment and offers a balance between child initiated and adult led group time activities. Most children play spontaneously although some may need adult support and it is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

Teaching across the setting is delivered in accordance with the Government's statutory document "The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" (September 2025). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements.

The curriculum has 3 prime areas of learning:

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

There are also 4 specific areas of learning:

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

These areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Ares of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning.

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Aims

We aim to:

- Promote and develop personal, social and emotional well-being.
- Challenge children and set high expectations for learning.
- Develop each child's skills, understanding and enjoyment in all the seven areas of learning.
- Establish good partnerships with parents and carers and involve them as partners in learning.
- Provide an environment that promotes independent learning.

- Allow children time to explore, rehearse and refine skills.
- Allow children to develop and follow their own interests.
- Ensure there is equality of opportunity in the learning and teaching, with the achievements and well-being of every child being important.
- Foster and develop each child's characteristics of effective learning.
- Recognise and value the importance of a mutual respect for everyone.
- Have a responsibility to each other, fostering a caring and thoughtful community.
- Equip the children with resilience, confidence and self-esteem that enable them to feel comfortable and secure in their environments.

Quality of learning through play

Skilled and thoughtful practitioners will support learning by:

A Unique Child

- Seeking to know and understand each individual child and their learning and development.
- Showing interest and celebrating with children their interests and achievements.
- Supporting children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture.
- Recognising what children understand, know and can do, and supporting them in reaching their potential.

Positive Relationships

- Maintaining close, caring and respectful relationships.
- Encouraging and supporting children to relate to others.
- Supporting children to resolve their own conflicts through problem-solving.
- Recognising that parents and practitioners have a lot to learn from each other.

Enabling Environments

- Ensuring children have sustained time to develop child-initiated activities.
- Arranging, resourcing, and making time for children to make free use of rich indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Observing children as a natural part of all normal activity.
- Interpreting children's actions and words to try to understand the child's thinking and learning.
- Being sensitive to the child's thinking and learning when deciding when to interact and when to value the child's independent activity.
- Joining in play and child-initiated activity following children's agendas.
- Scaffolding children's learning through talk, discussing strategies and ideas, suggesting possibilities and modelling approaches.

Learning and Development

- Using daily events within the routine to provide worthwhile real-life experiences.
- Varying experiences, using fresh, creative and playful approaches.
- Providing first-hand experiences to explore and discover.
- Recognising that, in their play, children use the experiences they have and extend them to build up ideas, concepts and skills.
- Planning and resourcing a challenging environment where children's play can be supported and extended using well-planned out resources and adult intervention through objective led planning.
- Directly teaching, through demonstrating or explaining.
- Encouraging and supporting children to persevere through difficulties, to take risks, to ask questions and problem-solve.

- Using the language of learning to focus children on themselves as learners Identifying and supporting next steps in learning.

Planning and assessment

Children's interests and developmental needs are at the forefront of planning in the EYFS. While termly themes may be used as a flexible starting point, planning is responsive and adapted to reflect children's current learning and next steps. Practitioners use ongoing observations and interactions to shape both continuous provision and adult-led experiences, with adaptations reflected in weekly planning.

Staff plan activities and experiences that support effective learning, with a strong focus on the three prime areas for younger children. Planning takes account of each child's stage of development to ensure experiences are appropriately challenging and engaging. Where a child has a special educational need or disability, staff consider the need for additional support and work with relevant professionals where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

At West Meadows, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

When children enter FS1 staff take account of any information from a child's 2-year-old progress check this 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Risk Assessment

Staff ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that staff and children are not exposed to risks. Written risk assessments are in place to identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis. These are completed daily by staff and actions to ensure safety are recorded as needed.

Safeguarding and welfare concerns

Safeguarding

Practitioners will follow the school's policy for safeguarding but must also observe the following procedures.

- Mobile phones and personal cameras must not be used to photograph children within the setting and mobile phones should not be used where children are present.
- The lead practitioner (Mrs McCormack) is responsible for liaison with the Head of School.
- The lead practitioner must attend a child protection course that enables them to understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse or neglect.
- The lead practitioner and Head of School must ensure that staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and have up to date knowledge.
- OFSTED must be informed of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any member of staff or person working on the premises.
- Written consent must be received from parents to place photographs of the children on the school's websites. If consent is not provided, photographs of the child must not be placed on school websites as part of topic learning journeys etc.

Practitioners must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Staff must monitor the following issues of concern:

- significant changes in children's behavior
- deterioration in children's general well-being
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
- children's comments which give cause for concern
- any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child's home or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children, for example: inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images

Following the schools whistleblowing policy all staff are aware how to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practise in the setting.

Child Absences

School will follow up on absences in a timely manner following the schools **attendance policy.**

Suitable people

School follows the **HCAT safer recruitment handbook** to ensure that the pre employment checks set out in KCSIE are followed. This includes ensuring staff have the relevant qualifications, training and have passed any checks to fulfil their roles as well as obtaining appropriate references.

All new staff must receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities within the setting and to be made aware of the welfare requirements. Practitioners must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere

Mrs. J McCormack (F1 teacher/Foundation Stage Lead) is responsible for the management and day to day running of foundation stage.

We will always ensure that all members of staff are PFA trained. At least one person with a current pediatric first aid certificate will be present in the setting at all times. Whenever first aid is administered, the incident must be recorded on Arbor under medical event. In the case of any head injury, whether first aid is required or not, and in the case of serious injury parents must be informed by text message or phone call dependent on the severity. For head injuries it most be recorded on Arbor, the bump note will be emailed to parents.

Only people over the age of 17 can be included in staff ratios. Children must always be within sight or hearing and usually within sight and hearing. Staff ratios at West Meadows will be in F1, one adult to every 13 children, one of the adults will be a qualified teacher and the other will hold a **relevant** level 3 or equivalent qualification. Where a qualified teacher is not present there will be at least one member of staff for every 8 children.

In F2 there will be one class teacher to every 30 children and one member of staff with a level 3 or equivalent qualification. On outings and excursions there must be one adult for every 4 children under the age of 5 and one adult per 8 children aged 5 or over. At least half of the adults must be employed by the academy, and a first aider must always be present. Students, volunteers and apprentices must hold a valid PFA certificate to be included in staff ratios.

In the case of mixed age classes, the school will determine ratios guided by ratio requirements and the needs of individual children in the setting. In exercising this discretion school will comply with the statutory requirements set out in the EYFS framework.

Suitable Staff - there are 4 permanent members of the foundation team.

Mrs. J McCormack: Foundation 1 /EYFS Lead
Miss K Jobling: FS2 Teacher/SENCO
Miss M Kilner: F1 Classroom assistant
Miss. L Philips: F2 Classroom assistant
All staff are pediatric first aid trained.

If practitioners are taking medication that may affect their ability to care for children they must seek medical advice to ensure that providers are informed that they remain suitable to work with and look after children. All staff medication must be stored out of children's reach at all times.

Health

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

Staff follow the schools **intimate care policy** to ensure that all requirements in the EYFS framework are met regarding toileting and intimate hygiene.

Food and drink

Drinking water will always be available either through their own water bottles brought in from home or through cups provided from school. Children will be able to access a healthy snack daily. Food for the children will be prepared in the kitchen and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure health and safety requirements are met. Surfaces in the kitchen area must be kept clean and hygienic. All knives must be stored out of children's reach and must not be left out on work surfaces.

Adults and visitors present in Foundation Stage must only have hot drinks in lidded cups or flasks and should take special care to ensure they are not left unattended within the reach of the children.

Safer Eating

Children will be supervised at all times when eating by a qualified pediatric first aider. Children must be in sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible providers should sit facing children while they eat to make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and food sharing.

Before a child attends setting we will obtain any information about special dietary requirements, including allergies, intolerances and any special health requirements. This information will be shared with all staff involved in preparing and handling food.

School staff will ensure they are updated regularly by parents / carers and where appropriate health professionals to develop allergy plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. Through regular training staff are aware of symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis.

School will prepare food in a way to prevent choking following advice from Food Safety – help for early years providers. If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, this will be recorded detailing where and how the child choked and ensure parents / carers are made aware. These records will be reviewed periodically to identify any trends to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate actions will then be taken to address identified concerns.

Managing behaviour

- We support all children to develop their own positive behaviours through self-regulation.
- All behavioural issues are dealt with discreetly by a steady and regulated adult to ensure that no child is subjected to feeling shamed or embarrassed. (See the whole school behaviour policy for further details)
- We aim to adopt a positive approach to behaviour management so all efforts and incidences of good behaviour are praised and modelled to the other children through verbal praise.