



Early Years policy

Date: October 2022

Due for review: October 2024



Early Years - meet the Early Years Leads



Mrs Struthers

At West Rainton Primary School our aim is to provide all of our children with the highest quality early learning experience in a safe, secure and happy environment. We believe this is vital, as it is a key stage of development which gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide a solid foundation for future progress through school and life.

I have always been passionate about the early years and childhood development. As a newly qualified teacher, my first job was in a reception class. Here I got to witness at first hand the lasting, positive impact an early years teacher can have on children's well-being and development. I felt privileged to be given the opportunity of opening young children's minds to new concepts and ideas on a daily basis. After teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 for 10 years, I returned to the early years. First as a reception class teacher and then in 2016 as early years leader, a role I share with Miss Charlton.

As subject leader, I am passionate about providing rich and varied opportunities and experiences to ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Every child deserves the very best start in life and we are committed to ensuring that this is at the very heart of our learning experiences and provision at WRPS.

Miss Charlton



At West Rainton Primary School our aim is to provide all of our children with the highest quality early learning experience in a safe, secure and happy environment. Early education provides children with knowledge and skills which are the building blocks for a solid foundation for future progress through school and life. I have always been passionate about the early years and childhood development.

I went to university to firstly study Early Childhood Development, and then went on to achieve my teaching qualification. I have been immersed in the early years my whole teaching career, and one of the greatest privileges is seeing the progress children are continually making in all areas of learning, and seeing my own input into this through encouraging them, demonstrating how to do something, explaining something, modelling language, asking questions and introducing new ideas.

As an early years' teacher, you never know what to expect next! One minute can be spent pretending to be a police officer to help a group develop their role-play; the next leading a science investigation into which materials float, with a child who wants to make a boat. Whilst this is very demanding at times, it is completely worthwhile; seeing the progress that happy and confident children make. In my early years' subject leader role, alongside Mrs Struthers, I can demonstrate my passion for providing rich and varied opportunities, encouraging children to form attitudes and develop characteristics of learning which will last throughout their lives.

If we can support two-, three-, four- and five-year-olds to seek challenge, take risks, make links between areas of learning, and to reflect and try again when things go wrong, they will carry these attitudes with them in the future to become creative, resilient and adventurous learners.

We are whole-heartedly committed to ensuring that this is at the very heart of our learning experiences and provision at West Rainton Primary School.

Mission Statement

The EYFS states:

'Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world. Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant.'

At West Rainton Early Years, we ensure that learning outdoors is given equal status as indoor learning and is planned for as an integral part of the play and learning provision for EYFS. Children have daily access to the outdoor environment for both continuous provision and focused activities. Wherever possible, inside and outside should complement one another, and learning in one area should reinforce learning in the other. Therefore, planning links to our themes and literacy and math's learning, extending skills by providing opportunities on a larger scale.

EYFS staff bear in mind the needs of all our children: girls, boys, different ethnic groups and children with disabilities. We monitor and review the resources that are available, how they are set up and used to ensure that the Outside Area provides a rich Learning Environment that positively encourages Inclusive Education.

The outdoor learning environment is set up daily as a stimulating and inviting space, which supports learning across all areas of learning both Prime and Specific areas and to promote Characteristics of Effective Learning. Due to the size of the outdoor space and to ensure effective adult interactions and supervision specific areas are set up. These alternate to meet curriculum needs.

Links to other policies

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Outdoor classroom policy
- EYFS
- PE
- Behaviour management

Aims and principles:

Access all weathers Additional resources boxes may be used to support learning in windy, wet and snowy conditions. In wet /cold weather we will judge the merits of Outdoor Play on a day-to-day basis due to the nature of our external provision. If an area is waterlogged or icy it maybe3 off

to prevent the children getting too wet or the increased chances of injury. Climbing equipment is not to be used in icy and wet conditions.

Clothing

Children have wellies and waterproofs to allow access to outdoor play in wet weather. Scarves to be worn under coats. Sun cream and sun hats to be worn in hot weather as in line with the school policy.

Risk assessments.

Good risk management processes are in place, taking all reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children are kept to a minimum. This does not mean removing appropriate experiences that have high developmental benefit; it does mean finding ways for children to engage in them without undue risk of harm. Daily visual risk assessments are carried out by staff before the start of the school day to ensure the area and equipment are safe, this includes checking equipment for damage and removing litter, animal mess, fungi. Staff are to wear gloves to do this and waste is to be placed in a nappy bag, this and gloves are to be disposed of in the wheelie bin. Resources that become unsuitable for good quality play will be removed by staff. Any issues are reported immediately to the teacher in charge and/or the site manager and any actions to be taken to be communicated with all staff and as necessary to the pupils. The Health & Safety group (inc Governor) will include the EYFS outdoor area in their risk assessment walk and then report and respond to any risks identified. Staff to make premises checks which include outdoor play equipment. The School's Insurance provision does not cover unsupervised siblings use of outside equipment (the child has not been taught how to use the equipment safely, or may have incorrect dress). No permission is given to siblings to play on outside equipment. In the event of a fire or the fire alarm sounding children will stop what they are doing immediately. They will then line up at the fire assembly point with the rest of the class.

Role of Adults

A minimum of 1 member of staff need to be outside at all times. Students are additional help but are not included as qualified staff. If at any stage during the day there are a large number of children outdoors, extra adult help can be called for and if most of the children are outside, more adults need to be outside, if possible (this should be determined by the lead professional in the unit).

Safety

Staff outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave the area for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility. Staff must be made aware of any medical needs of children outside. If an accident occurs outdoors, the pupil will be treated, and forms completed outdoors as appropriate. Only in exceptional circumstances, if there is a serious accident (such as a fracture), should children be cared for outside. In the event of a serious accident more staff will obviously be needed outside.

Teaching and Learning

EYFS staff believe that the following are important if outdoor play is to be exciting, stimulating and rewarding for all concerned:

- EYFS staff need to be actively involved for play to be successful interacting and collaborating with the children, and where appropriate to support, stimulate and feed ideas to children.
- EYFS staff need to talk with children, to listen to them, and to challenge them.
- EYFS staff need to act as role models, to support children in developing skills, and, in some situations, to teach them new skills.
- EYFS staff also need to act as role models to challenge stereotypes, and to challenge gender confirming attitudes. Sometimes their simple presence and participation at an activity will help raise the status of the activity.
- EYFS staff need to be able to observe, to monitor and to evaluate individual children's progress, and the way that groups of children play together.
- Most importantly they need to be able to respond to what they see and find out in as productive a way as possible where changes might be needed, and act on these needs.
- EYFS staff need to be aware of situations which might be dangerous, and if not able to prevent accidents, to be able to respond to them.

Rules about use of sand:

Dug out not thrown. Damp down when drying out. Awareness of shade (heat from sand). Encourage children to keep sand in designated sand area. Children to help tidy the sand tray. Sweep sand around perimeter of sand tray after each session. Children will be asked to not use the sand pit - if play is inappropriate after explanation of safety rules.

Outdoor Water Play

Water emptied at the end of each day - at home time to allow water to drain away and dry up. Staff need to be aware of the inherent danger of water play.

Track Bikes/scooters

Will be kept in designated 'zones'. Adult intervention to reduce speed/risk of collisions. Discourage bumping. Encourage correct use of bikes. Children should not carry toys/objects while riding on the scooters or bikes. Check clothes to ensure laces/pull cords are not in risk of catching in wheels. Children should not climb or ride the wheeled vehicles in long clothing, or while wearing dressing up clothes/shoes. Staff to remove from use, any bikes that fall into disrepair, notify administration staff.

Planted Areas

Prickles, protruding / broken branches etc. to be removed by Staff. Fungi to be removed with gloves and bagged before placing in the outdoor bin. Children finding mini beasts, digging, planting using natural resources to build with to wear gardening gloves and be reminded to wash hands after use. (See Outdoor Classroom Policy)

Mud kitchen

Children to use topsoil (as this is sterile). Any swept-up mud or sand be thrown away and not reused. Children to wash hands after use.

Climbing equipment

Pupils must wear appropriate footwear that provides good traction between feet and climbing equipment. If staff feel that footwear is unsuitable they will use their discretion to restrict a child from a particular area of the playground or wooded area. Children to be taught to make sure there is no one in the area they plan to jump off. To leave a gap between themselves and others. Children must not sit or climb on top of objects that are used for activities e.g. benches/tables /mud kitchen.

Balls games and other small equipment

Where appropriate, to be put out without other toys/equipment being put out in the same area, so that space is available to practice skills.

Tidying

At the end of the session the area should be checked to avoid children being left outside unsupervised. We believe that, as with inside, it is important for children to be involved in tidying up the Outside Area. We are aware however, that Health and Safety Outside is crucial, and that good organisation in tidying the Outdoor Area is essential. To ensure that 'tidying up time' is both safe and educational, children asked to stop what they are doing and listen for instructions on how to help tidy up. Children are not to carry heavy equipment. Adults should work in pairs to lift heavy items. Items should be stored safely in the shelter. All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years in line with the school's policy review programme. The subject lead, along with the identified governor leads, are responsible for reporting to the full governing body about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In light of this, policy amendments may be made.

L Charlton J Struthers September 2022

Due for review September 2024

Lead governors for EYFS- Mrs Christine Charlton