



# 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 for Early Years

At West Rainton Primary, we aim to meet the needs of all our children through:

- Providing opportunities and experiences for learning that are challenging and yet sensitive to the needs of all children, being inclusive of those with additional needs and recognising that children develop at different rates.
- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's holistic needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills.
- Monitoring children's progress and individual needs and taking action to provide support as necessary and allowing every child to progress.
- Fostering children's independence and self-confidence. Enabling them to make choices and decisions.

### Our Curriculum

The children in our early years classrooms experience a balance of child initiated and adult led tasks, adapted to meet the needs and wants of our very youngest pupils.

The content of our brand new EYFS curriculum has been mapped out carefully, with an ethos of ever-evolving change at the heart of the curriculum.

### ○ How art and design fits into our overarching curriculum key drivers:



#### **Aiming high**

We want our pupils to be inspired by our provision, and to ignite strong aspirations and high expectations of themselves and their future.

Promotion of strong attendance is fundamental in this. Through the use of visits, visitors and enriching experiences, we will build knowledge and understanding of career possibilities as well as a hunger to embrace new and exciting opportunities. We will ensure we plan regular opportunities for children to develop self-belief and to see the benefits of taking risks and overcoming challenge. Our pupils will be supported to light up future pathways to fulfilling lives of employment choices, prosperity and future happiness.

In Early Years we have a high expectation of all children and have created a challenging, enriching and varied curriculum. We have written our own curriculum based on our children's needs and interests. We have a secure and welcoming environment where children are active and inquisitive learners, are confident to ask questions and take risks.



### Skills for learning and life

We want pupils to leave our school with a bank of knowledge and a skillset specific to each individual subject, whilst also making transferable connections across other areas of learning and life. Fundamental to this, is a curriculum rich in core skills of language, vocabulary, communication, literacy and numeracy. Our pupils will be taught to be inquisitive, follow a line of enquiry to reach answers, and to recall and present their learning in a vibrant range of ways. Opportunities to develop resilience, organisation, leadership, teamwork, adaptability, patience and initiative are all interwoven into our subjects and wider school life in order for our children to adjust to new learning situations.

In Early Years we promote independence and develop strong pathways for communication and language development through our Communication Friendly settings status. We work cooperatively to build strong relationships with children and their families.



### Growing healthily

Equally as important to us is the development of the whole child. Feeling safe, happy and valued is a fundamental right of all pupils. Our inclusive-rich ethos provides the backdrop to our personal development and wellbeing provision which is skilfully interwoven into all that we do. All pupils are supported to develop a strong understanding of the importance of good physical and mental health, whilst also learning a whole range of factors and influences that can have a negative impact on us. Making, nurturing and maintaining healthy relationships, both on and offline, equips children with the strength and security to recognise what they want and need in life. We believe a strong understanding of e-safety forms a crucial part of being a healthy, well-rounded 21<sup>st</sup> century global citizen.

In Early Years our children's health and well-being is paramount. Our children are encouraged to talk about and express their feeling in a safe environment. They are given a wide range of experiences to develop a healthy body and mind. We model positive attitudes and relationships.



## Knowledge of the world

When our pupils leave us at the end of Y6, we want them to feel so proud of themselves as people that they have the personal strength and self-confidence to find their place as positive global citizens. Through our carefully-planned provision, our pupils will experience a diverse and inclusive-rich experience that allows them to bank cultural capital as well as developing a secure understanding of the importance of equality. As well as a secure knowledge of British values, our pupils will have their minds and horizons broadened through diverse social, moral, spiritual and cultural experiences. Pupils will be regularly encouraged to revisit and extend their world-view, fostering tolerance, sensitivity and empathy to interact positively with others.

Our Early Years curriculum promotes an understanding of cultural differences, celebrations and traditions. We celebrate differences and promote each individual child. We carefully plan throughout the year a range of trips, visitors and parent sessions to enrich the children's wider experiences.

## Intent

West Rainton Early Years believes that all children deserve an education rich in memorable experiences that allows our children's creativity and curiosity to grow, alongside the development of key skills and knowledge. We believe that offering our children a strong foundation and a love of learning gives children the best chance to become well-rounded, happy individuals, ready to succeed in an ever-changing world. We recognise the importance of giving our children the best possible start to their education by planning and implementing teaching and learning opportunities that support them in reaching their full potential.

It is our intention to provide a stimulating learning environment where all children can work with adults and peers in a climate of mutual respect to develop confidence in their ability to learn. We aim to provide children with a well-structured, safe and active learning environment. This will enable our young learners to develop the skills, attitudes and understanding that support our children to become lifelong learners and encourage them to become active members of our ever-changing society.

## Implementation:

We recognise that children will learn most effectively when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults who care for them. We aim to provide a setting that encompasses a safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence that helps them to achieve their potential.

At West Rainton Primary School in Early Years, our curriculum is designed to be creative, inspiring, challenging, and memorable to provide all children with opportunities where doors are opened to dream for the future. Encompassed within our vision, is the need for pupils to be exposed to a range of experiences that broadens their understanding and equips them with the skills needed to be successful, confident, life-long learners who reach their full potential.

We aim to provide a curriculum which:

- Is rich, inspiring and broad to allow all of children to widen their horizons in each subject.
- Provides the depth that enables our children to become confident independent learners and are supported to have in depth knowledge and skills essential for all areas of development
- Has high expectations and challenge in order to build students' perseverance, resilience and self-belief.
- Promotes speech, language and communication opportunities to strengthen children's ability to learn and articulate their learning at a deeper level
- Delivers physical and mental wellbeing through holistic learning allowing children opportunities to exhibit spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding
- Fosters a love of reading with a range of texts.
- Provides children with a wide range of rich, first hand learning experiences to take the curriculum beyond the classroom and develop their love of learning, independence and creative thinking.
- Offers children a wide range of opportunities to personalise their curriculum in order to develop existing talents and interests and discover new ones.
- Raises children's aspirations and equips them with the knowledge and skills to flourish in the next stage of their education.
- Fosters the development of children's character, personal development, health and wellbeing preparing them to make a valuable contribution to society.
- Children are well prepared for life and are aware of how they can contribute and understand their local community.

### **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

As part of our provision on offer, **pupils with special educational needs** are planned for very carefully in school. This is an important part of the art curriculum, as we strive to ensure that all of our pupils fully understand what they are being taught. This may involve greater explanations about what they learn, and simplified tasks to ensure that pupils with SEND gain as much as they can from the learning on offer. In fact, quite often our pupils with more diverse needs enjoy the freedom and ownership of the more creative subjects. Our provision across the curriculum was highlighted when we were awarded the inclusive 'Centre of Excellence' award in late 2020. It is crucial for us that our pupils with SEND make progress, and move on from where they are in their learning journey.

This provision may look very different to our other pupils, through differentiation and modification of the curriculum. Our decisions are made in consultation with the SENDCo, Mrs Firth, who advises and supports members of staff with their provision

Our school takes consideration of our equal opportunities policy and inclusion. We recognise children as individuals and base our teaching upon our knowledge of their specific needs. A range of teaching methods and resources allow children with a wide range of abilities to achieve their full potential.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and at West Rainton Primary we 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. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. (For further information see Equality Policy.)

### **Positive relationships**

At West Rainton Primary School, we aim to develop secure and authentic relationships with the children and their families, focusing on a mutual respect and understanding. We work together as a team to ensure all children flourish in our care. We do this through our evolving provision, provided by knowledgeable and caring staff who will work together to ensure that each individual child's needs are met. We have an open door policy to foster good relationships with families, who understand that we will facilitate and scaffold their child's developmental needs effectively.

#### **○ Home/school links**

We understand that parents/carers have the most knowledge about their child and that by working closely with them there can be a positive impact on the child's development. We aim to work in partnership with all parents/carers, and value their contributions by:

- Involving them in our induction procedures.
- Outlining how parents/carers can support their child's learning at the meeting in July and other meetings during the year.
- Encouraging parents to complete pre-school and Reception 'All about me' activities.
- Updating the website termly, outlining the upcoming topics, as well as other letters as appropriate, giving suggestions for how parents/carers can support their child's learning.

- Operating an open door policy whereby parents/carers can arrange to come and discuss concerns and developments and through being able to contact the class teacher directly through ClassDojo.
- Inviting parents/carers to visit the classroom.
- Regular updates on ClassDojo, showing activities that the children have taken part in. Parents are encouraged to share pictures or information about special events on ClassDojo.
- Arranging opportunities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents e.g. Sports' Day, Class Assembly, EYFS performances, Stay and Play sessions (Nursery) and Parent Drop In sessions (Reception).
- Encouraging parents/carers to read to their child and also listen to their child read. • Inviting parents/carers to three consultation evenings (one each term).
- Providing a written report in July.

### **Enabling environments**

At West Rainton School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

### **Liaison with pre-school settings and induction**

Children joining our Nursery or Reception class from other settings are invited to explore their new classroom with their parents. If children have attended other pre-schools, staff have a telephone consultation, to gain information from practitioners who already have a good understanding of the children's achievement and needs.

### **Nursery to reception transition**

Throughout their time in Nursery, children will have met the adults working in Reception as they also work in nursery one morning each week. The Nursery and Reception teachers work closely together to ensure that all information about children is shared, in the summer term. In addition, Nursery and Reception put on an EYFS joint Christmas performance every year, share visitors and experiences and outdoor learning sessions together. Parents of children moving from Nursery to Reception will be invited to a transition meeting at the end of the Summer term where some of the small changes in routine will be explained. All nursery children have a visit to Reception, which includes a lunchtime.

## **Reception to year 1 transition**

Reception and Year 1 teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible. Reception children are already familiar with Year 1 staff through EYFS/KS1 and whole school activities. Some children will still be working within the EYFS when they transfer to Year 1. We continue to provide experiences and opportunities in line with their stage of development which improves children's confidence and independence, and attainment overall. The Year 1 teacher holds regular discussions with the Reception teachers to understand the needs of individual children. This ensures the Year 1 practitioner builds on the learning that has happened previously, and extend the opportunities offered; ensuring that the context for learning remains meaningful for the child. As well as ongoing encouragement, throughout the Reception year, to develop independence, in the summer term children will be given opportunities to prepare for Year 1

- Increased frequency of structured activities to be undertaken during the summer term, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- Participation in whole school assemblies.
- During whole school transition days, Reception children spend time in Class 2.
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet in July to pass on the EYFS Profile scores and discuss the individual needs of children.

- **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.

A McDonough October 2022

Due for review October 2024

Lead governors for EYFS- Mrs Christine Charlton