



Early Years Policy

Date: September 2025

Due for review: September 2026



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.

Introduction

Our Early Years provision is committed to fostering a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where young children in Nursery and Reception can develop essential skills and a love for learning. We follow a child-centred approach that values play-based learning, exploration, and social-emotional development in line with statutory requirements and best practices.

Aims and Principles

- To provide a high-quality learning experience that meets the individual needs of every child.
- To create an inclusive and supportive environment where children feel valued and respected.
- To promote learning through purposeful play, guided interactions, and structured activities.
- To foster strong partnerships with parents, carers, and the wider community.

Curriculum and Learning

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, ensuring a balanced curriculum that promotes the prime and specific areas of learning. Our approach includes:

- Encouraging curiosity, creativity, and independence through active learning.
- Developing communication, language, and literacy skills in an engaging manner.
- Supporting physical development through indoor and outdoor activities.
- Building positive relationships and emotional well-being through structured routines and interactions.

Environment and Resources

Our provision offers a well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environment designed to stimulate curiosity and imagination. We provide age-appropriate materials, sensory experiences, and opportunities for children to develop confidence and independence in their learning journey.

Safeguarding and Welfare

The safety and well-being of all children are our top priorities. We adhere to robust safeguarding procedures, ensuring staff are trained

All staff are:

- Trained in paediatric first aid, safeguarding, and food hygiene.
- Familiar with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Required to maintain high standards of hygiene, supervision, and emotional support in all routines.

Sleeping

We recognise the importance of sleep and rest in supporting young children's growth, development, and emotional wellbeing.

Sleeping Arrangements

- Children will be offered opportunities to rest or sleep according to their individual needs, in consultation with parents/carers.

- A quiet, safe, and comfortable sleep/rest area will be provided with age-appropriate beds or sleep mats.
- Each child will have their own bedding, which is washed weekly or sooner if soiled.
- Sleep routines will reflect home practices as closely as possible.

Supervision and Safety

- Children will be visually checked every 10 minutes while sleeping.
- Staff will ensure the sleep environment is free from hazards (e.g., no loose blankets, toys, or cords near sleeping areas).
- Sleep logs will be maintained, recording time, duration, and checks made.

Eating

We promote a healthy, balanced diet and create a positive mealtime environment where children can develop good eating habits and social skills.

- Meals and snacks will be provided by school in line with national healthy eating guidelines.
- Home packed lunches parents advised on healthy eating options, packed lunches will be checked for choking hazards and food safety.
- Children will be encouraged to feed themselves as developmentally appropriate, with staff offering assistance where needed.
- Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions where conversation is encouraged.
- Cultural and dietary needs (including allergies, intolerances, religious restrictions, and parental preferences) will be respected and catered for.

Food Safety and Hygiene

- All food is prepared and stored following food hygiene regulations.
- Children will wash their hands before eating.
- Staff will supervise children and always be in sight and sound of children, understanding choking can be silent.
- When supervising one staff member will be paediatric first aid trained.

Allergies and Medical Needs

- Allergy and dietary requirement information will be clearly displayed for all staff.
- Staff are trained in recognising and responding to allergic reactions.
- Parents must inform the nursery of any changes to dietary needs or allergies in writing.

Nappy and Toilet Training

We recognise that nappy changing and toilet training are important aspects of a child's development and are handled with dignity, privacy, and care.

Nappy Changing

- Nappy changes are carried out in a designated, hygienic area by a known key person wherever possible.
- Gloves will be worn by staff and changed between children.

- Soiled nappies will be disposed of in a sealed bin in line with infection control procedures.
- Changing mats are cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- A record of nappy changes is maintained.

Parental Partnership

- We work closely with parents to understand each child's routine and preferences.
- Parents provide nappies, wipes, and creams unless otherwise agreed.

Toilet Training

- Toilet training is introduced in partnership with families, based on the individual child's readiness and confidence.
- Children are never pressured to toilet train before they are developmentally ready.
- Staff will support children in recognising bodily cues and using the toilet independently, encouraging regular toilet visits throughout the day.
- Accidents are treated sensitively, and children are changed promptly and discreetly.

Hygiene and Dignity

- Children are encouraged to develop independence in handwashing and hygiene.
- Staff support is offered as needed in a respectful and child-centred way.

- How Early Years 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 21st 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 and 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

At West Rainton Primary School, we believe every child deserves an enriching education filled with memorable experiences that foster creativity, curiosity, and a love for learning. Our goal is to provide a strong foundation that nurtures confident, well-rounded and happy individuals ready to thrive in an ever-changing world.

We recognise the importance of offering our children the best possible start to their education by creating purposeful learning opportunities that support their full potential. Our aim is to establish a stimulating and respectful learning environment where children develop confidence in their abilities, fostering a love for lifelong learning.

Implementation

We understand that children learn best when they feel safe, valued, and supported by nurturing relationships with trusted adults. Our Early Years setting provides a secure, engaging environment where children can explore, discover, and develop their skills with confidence.

Our curriculum begins with structured teaching sessions and adult-led activities, building a strong foundation in essential skills, knowledge, and understanding. These experiences then extend into child-initiated learning and continuous provision.

We follow a curriculum developed by ourselves with the children at the heart, adopting a thematic approach to learning. Each half-term, children explore a range of topics introduced through creative and memorable experiences, following the children's developmental journey and fostering their interests. Our approach gives children the opportunities to apply learning from across the curriculum that gives their work practical context and also opportunities to apply knowledge and skills they have learned through a variety of learning opportunities and experiences. Each half term, children will cover a several topics. These topics are introduced to our children in a creative way and usually through a memorable experience. Each topic is then delivered through a staged approach incorporating an initial engagement stage to capture the children's imagination in their new topic or theme of learning.

Throughout Nursery and Reception, we use continuous observation and assessments to track progress. Our relationships with children support their personal growth, ensuring they reach their full potential.

Impact

Our Early Years provision offers dynamic learning experiences indoors and outdoors, equipping children with the tools they need to become engaged and curious learners.

The skills developed in Early Years form the foundation of future learning and are critical for success in the National Curriculum. We emphasize exploration and discovery, allowing children to build a strong knowledge base before transitioning to more structured learning in later years.

Teaching and learning

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.
- High expectations and challenge in order to build students' perseverance, resilience and self-belief.
- Promote 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 their 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.

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to inclusivity and ensure that all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), receive tailored support. We adapt teaching methods and resources to meet individual needs, enabling every child to reach their potential. Our inclusive approach was recognised with the 'Centre of Excellence' award.

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.

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. Building strong relationships with children and families is at the heart of our approach. We foster a welcoming, respectful, and collaborative environment where every child is supported to thrive. Our dedicated staff work closely with parents and carers, maintaining an open-door policy to ensure effective communication and shared responsibility for each child's learning and development.

Home-School Links

We value parents and carers as partners in their child's education. Our collaborative approach includes:

- Induction procedures for new starters.
- Information sessions outlining how parents can support learning at home.
- 'All About Me' activities to understand each child's background and interests.
- Regular website updates and ClassDojo communications.
- Open-door policy for discussions and queries.
- Classroom visits and stay-and-play sessions.
- Shared learning experiences through performances, assemblies, and sports days.
- Encouraging home reading and engagement with school learning activities.
- Termly parent consultations and an annual written progress report.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that a well-planned learning environment is essential for children's growth and development. Our approach includes observing children's interests and abilities to design challenging yet achievable activities. Our carefully structured indoor and outdoor spaces provide rich learning opportunities that inspire curiosity, independence, and creativity.

Through our well-rounded Early Years provision, we aim to nurture happy, confident, and capable learners who are fully prepared for their educational journey ahead.

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 September 2025

Due for review September 2026

Lead governors for Early Years- Mrs Christine Charlton and Mrs Helen Forster