



WESTONZOYLAND

**Community Primary School
and Pre-School**

EYFS Teaching and Learning Policy

January 2025

Rationale

Westonzoyland Primary School strives to give each child the best possible start in life. We have high expectations of all children and we encourage them to develop independence throughout their time in the Early Years. We are committed to providing high quality care and education and we aim to provide a wide range of learning experiences. Children's interests, previous experience and needs are carefully considered when planning for their learning. We strive to build good relationships with parents to secure a strong link between home and school. We use the following key documents to underpin our practice in the Early Years:

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2024),

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile handbook (DfE, 2016),

Development Matters (2024)

Guiding Principles

The EYFS Framework identifies four guiding principles which we use to shape our practice in school:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

Contents of policy:

- Structure of Early Years
- The Curriculum and Characteristics of Effective Learning
- Teaching and learning
- Parent partnership
- Home learning
- Safeguarding and risk assessments
- Transition between year groups and other settings
- Planning and assessment

Structure of the EYFS department

Pre-School:

In Pre-School, each child has an allocated Key Worker. The allocated Key Worker will work with their Key Children in Adult Led learning. Children then have free-flow throughout the unit during continuous provision. Children can start at the Pre-School at any point throughout the year. Key Workers work closely with parents to help children get used to the Pre-School routine and are a fundamental point of contact for parents. Key workers adapt the learning to suit the individual needs of their Key Children and are primarily responsible for their observations and assessment judgements relating to these children.

All Pre-school staff have a given area of responsibility in the setting and should ensure that this area constantly provides high quality, safe and stimulating learning opportunities in line with given planning.

There is an allocated Pre-School Manager who is responsible for the day to day management of the Pre-School, including ensuring that Key workers provide adequate assessment and high quality learning opportunities.

Reception:

The reception class is led by a teacher and usually at least one teaching assistant. Adults work together to provide stimulating learning experiences and opportunities. All adults are responsible for observations and collecting assessment information, however it is the class teacher's responsibility to oversee this process. Children are provided with high quality whole class sessions in conjunction with small group work and continuous provision.

At the start of the year, most if not all children start attending the setting full-time, as many of them have already attended our Pre-School. Teachers discuss with parents of children who have not attended our setting whether they are able to start full-time straight away or begin with mornings for the first few days.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Throughout the department, there are a number of named staff who are responsible for ensuring that all children receive a high quality provision. They have a number of specific responsibilities outlined in the table below. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but is to provide a useful reference point for some of the key areas of responsibility in order to aid clarity.

Headteacher/ DSL	• Escalation point for safeguarding concerns • Reporting point for significant behaviour incidents - including all those which result in injury • Reporting point for violence towards staff • Only person able to authorise the exclusion of a child • Authorisation for budgetary expenditures • Responsibility for recruitment of staff • Can authorise changes to EYFS staffing rota • Escalation for appraisals or capability issues • Premises manager • Reporting point for HR issues including absences, fitness for work or grievances
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	• Reporting point for whistleblowing or reporting concerns relating to staff and conduct • Reporting point for parental complaints • Staff appraisal of KS1 Lead
Deputy Head SENDCo/ Deputy DSL	• Liaises with and advises on children who display SEND characteristics in the EYFS • Must authorise all EHCPs before they are submitted • In absence of DSL, escalation point for safeguarding concerns • Please see job description for more detailed information
Early Years Subject Lead	• All class based duties • Monitoring whole department summative assessments and ensuring all children are making adequate progress • Monitor and support planning to ensure a rich curriculum which provides the correct opportunities • Monitor the setting to ensure that the physical provision is inviting, enriching and appropriate to learning needs • First point of contact for Pre-School manager • Managing parental concerns if they require escalation • Managing transition from Pre-School to Reception • Moderating assessment data with Pre-School manager • Departmental staff appraisals in liaison with Headteacher • Reports to the Headteacher on issues related to EYFS • Liaise with Pre-School manager with learning and staff development
Pre-School Manager	• Monitoring all Pre-School summative assessments and ensuring all children are making adequate progress • Ensuring all planning develops children's skills and provides curriculum coverage • Day to day management of staff • Managing parental concerns if they require escalation • Monitoring children with additional needs, including ILPs and support plans. Ensuring that these are implemented. • Making a referral to the EYSENDCo with liaison with school SENDCo if necessary via whole school-based referral systems. • Monitoring all behaviour, incident and safeguarding concerns and implementing necessary steps to minimise incidents • Ensuring quality of planning and provision in the setting including rich opportunities for learning • Management of the setting to ensure a safe, attractive and rich learning environment • Management and monitoring of liaison with parents to ensure that they are well informed about their children's progress, needs and behaviour • To actively promote the Pre-school to attract parents to the setting and ensure that the Pre- is successful • Liaising with Early Years subject Lead regarding transitions • Moderating assessment data with Early Years Subject Lead
Key Workers	• Summative assessment and updating Tapestry • Planning for Key worker children taking in to account individual needs • First point of contact for parents • responsibility for ensuring an area in the setting constantly provides high quality, safe and stimulating learning opportunities in line with given planning • Regularly meeting with parents to inform them of their children's progress • Identifying additional needs and implementing Wave 1 interventions if necessary • Completing behaviour forms, incident forms and following the Safeguarding Policy • Please see job description for more detailed information

The Curriculum and Characteristics of Effective Learning

Pre-School and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available on the school website,

This clearly defines what we teach. This policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and inter-connected. Three areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2021: 1.3). These are known as the prime areas. There are also four specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Prime areas:

- Communication and Language - Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- Physical Development - Moving and Handling, and Health and Self-care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development - Making relationships, Sense of self, Understanding emotions

Specific areas:

- Literacy - Reading and Writing
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World - People and Communities, The World and Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design - Creating with materials and Being Imaginative and expressive

Characteristics of Effective Learning:

The EYFS Framework identifies three characteristics of effective learning. The Pre-school and Reception staff plan activities within with these characteristics in mind:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

On parents' evenings, Keyworkers and class teachers inform parents on their child's skills and abilities in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning. At the end of Reception, teachers also provide parents with a written report which includes information on each characteristic.

Year 1 teachers meet with the Reception teacher during the Summer Term to discuss each child's stage of development and their needs during transition

Teaching and learning

We believe it is essential to have a balance between adult and child-led learning in the Early Years. This mix allows children to practise new skills and take ownership of their learning by applying it in different situations.

Carefully planned adult-led activities are important to ensure children learn specific skills and knowledge. Through children's carefully structured play, they can practise these skills and we can then see how much of this learning children have embedded. Both Reception and Pre-School follow daily timetables which provide set times for adult-led sessions and time for children to learn through continuous provision. Teachers plan for both adult-led and child-led sessions (In The Moment Planning in Pre-School, Objective-Led planning within Reception) based on children's needs, interests, and any gaps in their learning. Staff will make on-going assessments of the progress and attainment of each child and use this information to aid future planning (see EYFS assessment policy for more information).

Learning through play (child-led learning)

Learning through play and practical hands on experiences underpins our approach to teaching and learning in Early Years. Through play children learn best, developing skills in all areas of the Early Years curriculum. Children are able to practise and learn new skills and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace facilitated by experienced practitioners. Independent and scaffolded learning takes place both indoors and outdoors, providing opportunities for children to explore their immediate environment.

For most children their play/independent learning is natural and spontaneous although some children may benefit from support. Adults model and provide time, space and appropriate resources which inspire independent learning opportunities with creativity and imagination. Staff observe play and join in when appropriate, watching and listening before intervening in order to best support children's learning.

Adults will model, observe, facilitate and extend children's learning. They will often ask children questions about the independent learning in order to further develop their understanding and knowledge. All staff value child-initiated learning and provide safe but challenging environments that support and extend learning and development.

The provision of appropriate learning resources, equipment or learning environment is essential to ensure that children experience rich child-led learning opportunities which stretch them in their skills. This is a very different than children reverting to the same toys day after day, or being overwhelmed with equipment so that they tend to 'graze' without exploring in any depth. At Westonzoyland we know that it takes as much skilled oversight to ensure quality child-led learning as it does for adult-led activities.

Adult-led learning

Through adult-led activities we can introduce children to new ideas, provide opportunities for them to develop their skills and ensure that they experience all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In addition to child-initiated learning, children are provided with daily adult-led sessions which usually take place within their keyworkers/classes.

Children also have at least two daily story sessions. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc. Teachers plan sessions based on the children's needs and differentiate them accordingly. Children

are active learners during these sessions and they are provided with skills which they can then go and practise independently. Adult-led learning can also take place during continuous provision and indoor and outdoor activities are planned to help address gaps in children's learning.

Outdoor learning

Outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the Early Years and it has a positive impact on children's development. Being outdoors offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active. It also offers opportunities to do things in different ways and on different scales compared to the indoors. Our outdoor environment provides a range of resources and activities for children to explore and we try to ensure each of the curriculum areas are incorporated into the outdoor environment each day.

Pre-School and Reception each have their own outdoor areas and all of the children have free-flow access to them during continuous provision. Each area has a range of learning opportunities including a mud kitchen, climbing equipment, role play/stage area, balancing equipment, large scale construction, wheeled vehicles, water play and literacy and maths opportunities. Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where there is a balance of child-led and adult-led learning. The outdoor area is comprehensively risk assessed and daily checks are completed by staff. Both Pre-School and Reception children have regular access to the wider school environment, enjoying sessions in the garden, field and forest area. Regular walks are also planned within the village, including local farms, park and wild welly walks.

Parent partnership

Parents play a key role in children's development and it is essential for us to have a strong partnership with parents to ensure each child reaches their full potential. We encourage parents to make contributions and share information about their child's learning and development. We also regularly share information on children's progress and next steps in learning. We do this through:

- Providing regular advice on home learning (see section 5)
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Special assemblies, performances, Book and Biscuit sessions, sports day etc.
- Sending home a school planner so parents can comment on their child's reading and use it to communicate with the keyworker (Reception)
- Providing parents with access to Tapestry in order to view observations and contribute their own family activities.

'In the Moment' focus sheets for parental contribution

- Holding parents' evenings twice per year
- Having informal conversations at the start and end of the day
- Providing an opportunity for parents to meet key people before their children start Pre-School/Reception

Information for new parents and children

For Pre-School children, parents are invited to a 1:1 meeting with the Pre-School Manager prior to them starting in Pre-School. This provides an opportunity for key people to gather information on the child before they start Pre-School and allows parents to ask any questions they may have. The children are also invited to these meetings. Pre-School parents are also invited to an open day where they can tour the Pre-School, find out who their child's key person will be and find out information on school policies etc. After this meeting parents are given a Pre-school Welcome Pack which contains relevant paperwork and information they will need about the setting.

Most children starting Reception have come from our Pre-School so parents are already familiar with the school routines. There is a welcome meeting for all Reception parents in June/July which provides them with information on the daily timetable, how phonics is taught, the curriculum etc.. For parents of new children, they are also invited to a welcome meeting in the Summer Term where they will be provided with key information on school and also find out who their key person is. The children are also invited to these meetings. Story times are also planned in the later Summer term, where parents, with their new starters, are welcome to stay for story and rhymes.

Home learning

We value the importance of home learning and all key people work closely with parents/carers to ensure they feel confident supporting children's learning at home. At each parents' evening, key people provide activity suggestions for parents to use at home to meet their child's targets. We also provide regular activity ideas for parents to complete with their children.

Pre-School

Throughout the year, children will receive reading books from our 'Pre School Library' and parents will be expected to share the story with them for 10-20 minutes each day. Getting good reading habits at a young age is a key indicator for future academic success.

Reception

During the first half term, children will receive their home reading book and parents will be expected to read/share the story with them for 10-20 minutes each day. Children may also receive home learning based on the work they have completed in class, including phonics and high frequency words to practise.

Safeguarding and risk assessments

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our whole school Safeguarding and Child Protection policy which can be found on the school website.

Risk assessments are kept electronically within the whole school's records. There are risk assessments completed for trips and specific events/types of play specifically aimed at the Early Years. Daily checks also take place in the outdoor environment and action taken accordingly. These have been read by all staff members and are reviewed frequently.

Transition between year groups and other settings

Pre-School to Reception

Pre-School and Reception teachers work closely together throughout the year and take part in joint moderations. This ensures the Reception Teacher develops a good understanding of Pre-school children's abilities and needs before they move up. There are two sessions within the summer term whereby Pre-school children attend Reception to meet the teacher and staff and become familiar with the routine and environment. The class teacher regularly drops into the Pre-school to chat to children and observe their learning in order to begin strong familiar relationships.

Reception to Year 1

Reception children make use of the whole school facilities such as the hall, forest area and KS1 playground to ensure the children are confident and well prepared for moving around the main school building. Playing out with the KS1 children at lunchtime also prepares them for mixing with older children. After their first half term, Reception children also attend whole school assemblies at least once per week.

The children have 2 transition days with their new Year 1 teacher during the final half term. The Year 1 teachers are provided with time to observe the children in the Reception environment. Reception teachers also moderate with Year 1 teachers during the year which helps inform the teachers of the children's abilities and needs before they move up.

At the end of each school year, teachers meet to share information on each child with their new class teacher/key person including their knowledge, understanding, achievements and end of year assessment data. Early Learning Goals are discussed at length for each child so that a clear picture of the whole child is shared. This ensures all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year. Teachers are also provided with copies of end of year reports for the children in their new class.

Other settings

We appreciate that starting at a new setting can be a daunting and unsettling experience for any child.

This is why we try to ensure that children have met their key person before starting school in September. If children have attended other settings, keyworkers will contact them to gain further information about the child and discuss how to ensure their transition is smooth. Reception teachers will also contact settings new children have attended and will arrange a visit to observe the child if appropriate.

Planning and assessment

We use half-termly topics in both Reception and Pre-School as a starting point to learn new things and ignite children's imaginations. These are generally based on Seasons. Our long term plans show

the topics we usually follow but they are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes or National events. Each half term the staff meet to plan the next topic and choose enhancements based on children's needs. Our short term plans are generally based on our 'focus' children's interests, for example, space, dinosaurs, role play etc.

The Pre-School use the 'In The Moment Planning' system. 'In The Moment Planning' is a system which means the children have more freedom of choice and can select their own activities. We would like to stress that we still have rules, boundaries and a fluid daily routine (including snack time, welcome time, group story/game time etc).

Planning in the moment is nothing new. Every time an adult looks at, and listens to a child, they are assessing and "planning" how to respond. These assessments and plans are based on the adult's observations of the child in that moment and also draws on any previous knowledge of the child. The response is "planned" in the moment and is uniquely suited to that unique child in that unique moment.

The Pre-School has a number of "focus children" per week. During this week, all interactions and learning opportunities observed by all staff members for these children will be documented. Your child's key worker will then feedback to you at the end of that week/ beginning of the next. Each child will have a focus week at least once a term. Parents are also involved on contributing to this.

We must stress that although staff are giving the focus children a bit more attention, staff are interacting with **all** children but not recording all interactions. For those children that are not focus children we will be recording wow moments and milestones on Tapestry as normal. All staff will have time for all children and will not be totally absorbed with the focus children.

Reception have planning templates for each area of learning with objectives taken from the Early Years school progression document, updated half termly. The planning shows children's learning challenges and enhancements that will be provided. The Pre-School's planning is documented on their 'In The Moment Planning' sheets and through regular observations on Tapestry.

For Phonics we follow Twinkl Phonics and adapt it to suit our children's needs. In Reception, we have whole class inputs followed by group work dependent on their individual needs. Within the Pre-School, children are organised into age groups so that they can more easily access age-appropriate phonic activities, again following Twinkl Phonics scheme.

Literacy is planned around quality texts as we find this is the best way to engage children. At the start of each text, we plan 'hooks' to provide an exciting start to the sequence of lessons. In Maths we use a range of sources, structured around the White Rose materials but we adapt them to suit our children in Reception. The emphasis is on practical engagement and knowledge, using a broad range of resources. Language and understanding, with an ability to apply this to a range of problem-solving tasks is at the heart of children's mathematical development.

For information on assessment please see our Early Years Assessment Policy (2025).