

WESTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Policy

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Westfield

PRIMARY SCHOOL

POSITIVITY
RESPECT
INDEPENDENCE
DIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE



Our Vision: We want all Westfield children to foster a 'Love of Learning and a Love of Life', enabling them to excel, be the best they can and achieve the necessary life skills for their future.



Our Mission:

We believe in the importance of children engaging, enriching and excelling at school. This allows them to make the very best progress they can in their learning, both academic learning and in learning about themselves, their relationships, making a positive difference in their community and the world in which they live.

The school will build on the qualities and skills which parents have fostered in the child at home. From the beginning, staff and governors will aim to create a caring and disciplined environment in which each child's well-being is valued and they are viewed as an individual.

We aim to provide the highest quality of education for all our children, in an environment that is challenging, motivating, caring and moral, where children can acquire the skills and knowledge appropriate to their individual needs through the delivery of a creative curriculum. Through our pledge we strive to provide a range of exciting learning and life experiences.

We help all children to grow emotionally and to learn that courtesy, excellent manners, first class behaviour and consideration and respect for others are very important qualities. We hope all our children will become happy, responsible, and independent young people.

EYFS Curriculum Intent, Implementation & Impact:

Intent:

1. We aim to help our youngest children achieve a love of learning and a love of life and be the best they can be, this begins with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, and continues through their school journey. It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Westfield the EYFS is recognised as the foundation of every child's learning journey.
2. Our curriculum is designed to be ambitious for all our children ensuring they have the best possible start to their school education, helping them gain the knowledge, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. The welfare of the children is central to our provision of care, learning and play.
3. Our curriculum prepares our children to become confident and fluent readers by ensuring the children acquire a broad vocabulary, communicate effectively and develop a secure knowledge of phonics, which will provide them with the foundations for their future learning.
4. Our approach to teaching early reading and synthetic phonics is systematic and provides our children with the tools and knowledge to read words and simple sentences accurately by the end of Reception.
5. Our curriculum is carefully mapped out, planned and sequenced so that it builds on what the children can already do and what they know, while also taking into account the children's interests and the learning opportunities that come up 'in the moment', supporting them to acquire and embed

foundational knowledge and skills for their future learning. We are committed to meeting the individual needs of all children, this includes those with additional needs, disadvantaged, more able and those for whom English is not their first language.

Implementation:

Our staff are highly skilled in teaching systematic, synthetic phonics (our Phonics Leader is based in Reception) and ensure that the children practise their reading from fully decodable books, which match their phonics knowledge. The staff promote a love of reading and books in a variety of ways, but including, reading to children in a way that engages and excites them, introducing new vocabulary, ideas and concepts.

Our staff are knowledgeable about all the areas of learning and manage the curriculum and pedagogy to ensure the learning needs of our children are met; teaching is designed to help children remember what they have been taught long term ('sticky' knowledge) and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts. The learning environments are designed and created to support our intent of an ambitious, well-planned and sequenced curriculum. Our resources are chosen and managed so that they meet the children's needs and promote and excite learning.

All children are respected and valued and we provide experiences to support their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development in a warm, caring and secure environment.

Through carefully-planned activities, play and 'back and forth' interactions, staff promote children's self-esteem and support them in developing skills, knowledge and understanding as they explore their world. Children are encouraged and supported in making choices and decisions as active learners. Their progress is monitored regularly in order to ensure that individual needs are identified and provided for. Staff regularly inform the children's parents about their progress, including how parents can further support their learning at home. Parents and school are partners in the child's learning.

Impact:

Children develop detailed, foundational knowledge and skills across all areas of learning in an age-appropriate way. They develop their vocabulary, communication skills and understanding of language across the seven areas of learning. By the end of the EYFS they use their knowledge of phonics to read accurately and with increasing speed and fluency.

By the end of Reception, the children are ready for the next stage of their educational journey, they have the knowledge and skills they need and they achieve well.

The children demonstrate positive attitudes to learning through their high levels of curiosity, motivation, concentration and enjoyment. They are more resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception year. Children are born ready, able and eager to learn, they are competent learners from birth and develop and learn in a wide variety of ways. As such they begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners in Reception to look carefully at the children in their care, consider their needs, their interests, and their stages of development and use all of this information to help plan a challenging, exciting and enjoyable experience across all the areas of Learning and Development. Identifying, and building on, what each child knows and can do is the foundation of inclusive early years' practice.

"Children are powerful learners from birth. They can develop strong habits of mind and behaviours that will continue to support them to discover, think, create, solve problems and self-regulate their learning. Children need consistent lived experiences of autonomy alongside support for their growing awareness and control of the processes of thinking and learning. Play, time, space and freedom to follow their intentions, sustained shared thinking, and experiencing the satisfaction of meeting their own challenges and goals all contribute to development as curious, creative, resourceful and resilient learners." **Birth to 5 Matters 2021**

There are overarching, guiding principles which shape the practice in the early years. These are:

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships

Enabling Environments **Learning and Development**

Positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development have all been identified by researchers as basic strategies for co-regulation. A pedagogy which includes co-regulation strategies will help children develop self-regulatory skills.

A Unique Child

Every child is unique. Every child is a keen and competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as stickers, certificates and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning and their own achievements.

We understand and observe each child's development and learning, assess their progress and plan for their next steps. Understanding that each child's journey is unique and the *"pathways toward maturity should be seen more as dancing around a balloon than climbing a ladder"* (Birth to 5 Matters, 2021).

All children are valued and respected equally regardless of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender and all have equal access to all aspects of school life and work. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. We welcome all children and families into our school so that they feel included, safe and valued. It is important to us that all children at Westfield are, and feel, safe.

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual provision maps identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. Reception teachers discuss these targets with the child and his/her parents/guardians. Progress is monitored and reviewed formally on a regular basis. The school's Inclusion Leader is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

We aim to educate children on boundaries and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them to develop these important life skills. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards, both within school and in the wider environment. We encourage a healthy lifestyle including taking exercise and eating healthy food.

Positive Relationships

At Westfield we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from a base of secure positive relationships. All EYFS staff aim to develop positive relationships which are warm and loving, responsive to the child's needs, supportive of their needs, feelings and independence and which foster a sense of belonging.

Strong Partnership between Parents

We believe that all parents/carers have a vital role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents play in the education of their child, the role they have played and the role they will play. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the

results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to build a strong partnership between staff and parents and carers. We do this through the following activities:

- Every family (parent and child) is offered an individual school visit before they start at the school which will take place in school in the child's classroom. This is a one on one meeting with the Year R staff in early September, allowing the building of relationships and sharing of key information.
- Opportunities in the Summer term prior to starting school to visit their class and spend time with their peers (in small groups) and the EYFS staff.
- Inviting all reception parents to an induction meeting, or sharing it with them virtually, during the Summer term before their child starts school, outlining the Reception curriculum to parents/carers to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home. This includes a short tour and visit to their child's new class.
- Sending home class newsletters and knowledge organisers, informing parents/carers of the learning that will be taking place at school, and a family learning sheet with suggestions of the types of activities that could be carried out at home to support that learning.
- Operating an open-door policy where parents can talk with us at the end of the school day, or via arranged phone call or class email.
- Involving parents by asking them to regularly contribute to their child's ongoing progress by observing achievements at home and letting us know through the use of 'Proud Clouds', as well as more informal means.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns or queries.
- Offering regular opportunities to see their child's learning in practise through 'Stay and Play' sessions, from the spring term, to allow the children to settle.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents, for example book looks, class assemblies, termly progress reports, 'Tea and Tissues' etc.
- Inviting parents to, or sharing with them virtually, workshops to develop their understanding of ways to support their child's learning at home.
- Encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.

- Discussing children's individual progress and targets with parents/carers at parents' evenings during the Autumn and Spring terms and providing a written report at the end of the academic year.

Enabling Environments

'Children are unique and holistic learners, thriving within environments that support their individual and diverse motivations, interests and needs'. (Birth to 5 Matters 2021)

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

We aim to provide the children with a wealth of possibilities within an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative, analytical and so on. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different learning areas: role play, book corner, writing area, maths area, knowledge & understanding area, listening centre, computer area, creative area, sand, water, construction, reflection and well-being area, small world and puzzles. These areas are carefully arranged and organised to support child-initiated learning and allow children to learn and explore securely and safely. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take increasing responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Learning and Development

At Westfield we consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in our care and use this information to plan an enjoyable, motivational and challenging experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

At Westfield we recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Play

is vital for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. "

(*"Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, EYFS reforms early adopter version 2020".*)

"If you want creative workers, give them enough time to play." (John Cleese)

"Children have a right to play. Play, both indoors and outdoors, makes a powerful contribution to children's wellbeing, development and learning". (Birth to 5 Matters 2021)

"The gift of play is the greatest thing we can ever possibly give a child". Greg Bottrill



There are seven areas of learning and development, at Westfield we believe these seven areas are vital in order to promote the development of the 'whole child'. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, starting from the child. The seven areas of learning and development are split into three prime areas and 4 specific areas:

The prime areas:

- ✓ Communication and language
- ✓ Physical development
- ✓ Personal, social and emotional development

There are 4 **specific areas** through which the 3 prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- ✓ Literacy
- ✓ Mathematics

- ✓ Understanding the world
- ✓ Expressive arts and design

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The characteristics of effective learning (playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically) supports children's learning across all areas of learning and development and are inter-connected with all the prime and specific areas of learning.

- **Playing and exploring** (engagement). At Westfield we support children's learning through carefully planned purposeful play and learning experiences, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. With a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities children and adults engage in exploratory, practical and hands on active learning, developing, extending and supporting independence and creativity through all areas of learning and development. We provide children with a wealth of opportunities to develop their spoken English language and communication skills, including 'serve and return' interactions. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They develop the willingness to 'have a go', find out and explore and play with what they know.
- **Active learning** (motivation). Active learning occurs when children are motivated, involved, concentrating and interested. When they persevere and gain enjoyment from achieving what they set out to do. At Westfield we provide opportunities for the children to have some independence and control over their learning and activities, learning to make decisions as their confidence develops and taking ownership of their learning.
- **Creating and thinking critically** (thinking). Children are supported and encouraged to develop their own ideas, making links and deciding ways of doing things. Adults support the children's thinking, offer encouragement, help clarify ideas and ask open ended questions. The children can access resources and decide how to use them, further extending their learning.

Planning

When planning the practitioners start from the child and consider ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development, ensuring foundational knowledge is built upon and embedded. All planning is based on children's needs and interests whilst taking account of the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the EYFS curriculum. This will usually take the form of an overarching topic, for example All About Me, Space, Fairy Tales, Farms, Going Wild!, Mad About Minibeasts.

Literacy and Mathematics in

Reception

Reading, writing, speaking and listening opportunities take place daily in a variety of ways. We sing and recite nursery rhymes, play rhyming games and identify sounds through listening games. We provide the children with many opportunities to experience a language rich environment, developing their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and being able to speak and listen in a range of situations. Children need secure skills in listening and hearing rhyming patterns if they are to make good progress in phonics and reading, these foundations underpin future learning.

The children experience daily phonics sessions, starting with learning the letter sounds and then practicing and building on their phonic knowledge for reading and writing.

The children will bring reading books home. Initially these will usually be wordless books and children are encouraged to look at the pictures and tell their own stories. They will quickly move on to fully decodable books, which match their phonic level. The children will take home two books, a fully decodable book and another book which will develop other reading skills and help develop a love of reading.

In Reception the children have access to the class reading corner. The children also have access to the 'Book Land' (our reading shed) where books can be borrowed and swapped. This allows them to choose a picture book to bring home for sharing and can be changed regularly. This is just a part of our approach to promote a lifelong love of reading. Every class also has a 'Reading Round the World' display, which promotes a love of reading and values the importance of reading.

The children take part in mathematics activities every day in school. The activities provide children with many and varied opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding, ordering and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, describing shapes and measuring. They will practice their maths skills through adult led and child led learning and play. The mathematics curriculum provides a strong basis for more complex learning later on in school.

'Forest School-Style' Outdoor Learning

In the Reception Year the children have the opportunity of a weekly outdoor learning session in our Wild Garden. This allows the children to be outside learning and playing in nature.

These sessions provide a child-led learning experience in our natural environment, offering regular opportunities for our Year R children to grow and develop holistically. Through ongoing sessions throughout the year, children engage in play, exploration and carefully supervised risk-taking activities that build their confidence and self-esteem.

The outdoor learning programme supports hands-on experiences that help children develop across all areas: socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. We create a nurturing, supportive environment where children feel

safe to experiment, try new things and take appropriate risks without fear of judgement.

This approach to outdoor learning helps our youngest children develop a meaningful connection with the natural world and understand their place within it. By engaging with real-world challenges and problem-solving in nature, children build self-belief and resilience. We recognise that risk-taking is a natural part of learning and development - not just physical risk, but also the emotional and social risks involved in trying something new. By supporting children to navigate and overcome these challenges in a natural setting, we help them become healthy, resilient, creative and independent learners.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Westfield we adhere to the principles of assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress, this is based on ongoing observations of what the children know and can do. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners and adults who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. Children are also encouraged to assess their own learning, primarily through discussion.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number and high frequency words, annotated examples of independent work, photographs, and information from parents. We plan for observations when undertaking short term planning, but are also ready for spontaneous observations.

Summative assessment

Individual assessments are recorded on Arbor termly. On-entry baseline assessments are based on transition documents from pre-school settings and initial observations. The government introduced a national baseline assessment for all Year R children from September 2021.

During the year the children continue to be assessed against development statements, identifying what they can achieve and next steps are then identified for them. Children's progress is monitored which allows the school to see if the children are making progress and working at an age appropriate level. Appropriate support is identified and given, if required. Teachers participate in regular in-school and cross Trust school moderation meetings, this provides a varied and external quality assurance and validation of our teacher assessments. The EYFS Profile data is analysed by the Head Teacher, the Assessment Coordinator and the EYFS leader.

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 meet Year 1 teachers during the course of school life, for example, key stage/whole school activities during the second part of the reception year
- EYFS Profiles are passed on to the Year 1 teacher and discussed
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss the individual needs of the children during the Summer term, including during handover meetings
- Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for a 'move up' day, as well as across up to 4 afternoons during the Summer term
- Year 1 teachers visit the children in their Reception classes during the Summer term
- Year 1 classrooms include learning areas similar to Reception, and have a dedicated covered outside learning environment. The Year 1 curriculum provides an excellent transition into Key Stage 1 through both teacher led and child led learning opportunities; continuous and enhanced provision provide daily opportunities for learning through play.

Stay and Play

Stay and Play sessions are held each week for Reception parents, from the Spring term, allowing children to settle into school life. Every Friday morning, parents (or grandparents and other carers) are invited to 'Stay and Play' with their children in the classroom. They 'Stay and Play' from drop off until 9.15am. Areas of learning are set out and challenges, learning objectives or suggestions are placed in each area of provision. These explain the learning intention and the steps needed to achieve it.

Unfortunately, due to Health and Safety younger siblings are not able to attend these sessions. For safeguarding reasons all phones and mobile devices must be kept out of sight in bags or pockets and NO photographs can be taken.

Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed as and when needed but at least every two years.