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Weston St Mary EYFS Policy

Reviewed by:	Date:	Changes made:
SLT, EYFS teacher and GB	10.12.24	Policy redrafted

I can do all things through him who strengthens me ~ Philippians 4:13

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.'
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021)

Aims

At Weston St Mary C of E Primary School, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. We understand that children develop quickly in the early years and a child's early experiences have a major impact on their future life chances. This is a crucial time for developing their enjoyment of learning, their engagement and motivation.

This policy sets out how we aim to provide:

- A broad and balanced curriculum which builds on children's interests and experiences, giving them the broad
- range of knowledge needed for good progress through school and life
- Opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left
- behind.
- Choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence
- Close partnership with parents/carers, valuing their contributions

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. (EYFS)

Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year. Children start Reception full time in September of the school year they will be five.

Overarching Principles

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four distinct but complementary principles that shape practice in early
years. These are:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

A Unique Child

At Weston St Mary, we recognise that every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs and Disability – We believe that all our children matter and we value the diversity of individuals within the school. We believe that equality of opportunities for all those in our care is paramount and all our policies, procedures and practice will reflect the rights of all children and adults including those with special educational needs or a disability, all ethnic and cultural groups and those with English as an additional language. We have a zero-tolerance attitude towards any form of discrimination and will challenge any inappropriate attitudes and practices.

We recognise the importance of early intervention in supporting a child's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional and behavioural development. Early intervention can take different forms, from supporting parents, school-based programs to improve children's social and emotional skills and additional support at school from appropriate staff (Teachers and Teaching Assistants). We make provision for all ability levels within school and, if deemed appropriate after discussion with parents/carers, support from outside agencies. The class teacher will be responsible for identifying and planning for individual needs with help from the SENDCO if applicable.

Our full procedures are outlined in the school's **Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy** and **Local Offer**.

Positive Relationships

At Weston St Mary, we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident, and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We also recognise that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators and that when parents and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children and we value being partners with them in their child's education. We do this by:

- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time with staff in their new classroom before starting school
- Showing respect and understanding for the role of the parent in the child's education
- Listening to accounts of their child's development and any concerns they may have
- Using Tapestry as a communication tool between teachers and families. Parents are also encouraged to contribute by sharing learning from home through Tapestry and commenting on observations about learning in school
- Sharing planning on the school website, through class newsletters and Tapestry
- Making parents feel welcome by being friendly and approachable
- Maintaining an on-going dialogue
- Meeting the needs of individual pupils and creating individual arrangements where needed
- Holding termly meetings for parents, during which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress and next steps for learning
- Sending home phonetically decodable Read, Write Inc Book Bag books and library books and encouraging parents to make use of the home school reading diary
- Inviting parents in the school to share their specialised skills
- Providing end of year reports which outline the progress and achievement made by each child
- Sharing activities that can be done at home to support learning
- Celebrating children's achievements with their parents, including weekly Celebration Worship
- Holding meetings to explain how parents/carers can support their children with areas such as early reading, communication skills, writing, mathematics, or personal/social development.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them so that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Enabling Environments

At Weston St Mary, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the
children's development. The environment in our EYFS classroom regularly changes to match the needs and interests of our cohorts. These changes happen in response to information gathered from observing the children and assessing their ongoing needs and development. Carefully selected resources are regularly added to areas of continuous provision, inside and outdoors, to further develop and extend a theme or topic and in response to children's interests. These resources are described as Enhanced Provision and are outlined in planning.

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas, for example: role-play, quiet reading, writing, numeracy, music, creative, malleable, sand, water, construction, and small world. The children also have daily access to the outdoor learning environment. Access to the indoor and outdoor learning environments has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. It provides opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors and allows children greater space to be physically active and exuberant.

Effective learning builds on and extends prior learning and follows children's interests. We begin by observing the children to find out about their individual needs, interests, stage of development and learning needs. We then use this information to plan challenging but achievable activities and experiences.

Learning and Development

At Weston St Mary we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.
We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand they are inter- connected. We strive to provide a tailor-made curriculum that uses Big Questions to create critical thinkers who can make deep and meaningful connections between all areas of learning. We aim to create awe and that engages and inspires our children, providing them with memorable experiences which prepare them for their next stage of learning.
There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early year's settings. The children will cover all seven areas of the curriculum through everyday activities. All the areas are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.
These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- Communication and Language.
- Physical Development; and
- Personal, Social, and Emotional Development.

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.
The specific areas are:

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.

- Understanding the World.
- Expressive Arts and Design.

We deliver learning for all the areas through, planned purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adultled and child-initiated activities. We believe that play in the Early Years classroom is essential and contributes to the development of the whole child. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. Through practice they build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. 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.

The characteristics of effective learning

In planning and guiding what children learn, adults working with the children reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. In planning children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and how they organise their own play. Consideration is given to creating opportunities for the children to demonstrate three characteristics of effective learning:

- 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

The role of the adult

We believe that it is vitally important for adults to support children's learning through play. Learning should be personalised by building on the child's interests and involving them fully in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build on their skills. Adults will:

- Question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking
- Extend vocabulary and knowledge, over time, building on prior knowledge, making connections with previous experiences.
- Encourage independence
- Add resources that stimulate, motivate, and engage the learner
- Demonstrate/model and work alongside children
- Help children to see links in their learning
- Support, reassure and encourage
- Encourage children to be problem solvers and investigators
- Help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- Observe and assess learning
- Record judgments and plan for next steps in learning
- Provide feedback to child/other adult/parents
- Ensure the environment is safe and secure

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Practitioners consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development. Adults working with our youngest children ensure a strong foundation for children's development in the three prime areas. The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning. This is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary.

The Planning within the EYFS is based around Big Questions. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning and feed into weekly

planning. However, the teacher may alter these in response to the needs, achievements, and interests of the children. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests, and next steps for learning. These observations and discussions with children then lead the direction of the planning.

In our Early Years Foundation Stage at Weston St Mary, we are committed to giving our children the best possible start to school life. We strongly believe that every child can and should succeed. Our unique
curriculum grows from the child (Ourselves) to their community (Our Community), and then the wider world (Our World). By building strong, supportive relationships with the children and providing a safe, nurturing, and exciting learning environment, we enable the children to flourish and achieve their potential.

The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the EYFS supporting document Development Matters (2023). Planning is based upon the Big Questions with discrete RE, phonics, maths and literacy directed teaching. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning for children working towards the Early Learning Goals. The Reception teacher works closely with all adults in the EYFS to plan for progression. All staff are involved in evaluating provision and planning changes or enhancements to support or extend children's learning.

As soon as children join our Reception Class they begin daily Read, Write Inc, phonics sessions. In addition, they follow the NCETM Mastering Number Program with daily fluency lessons delivered by their teacher.
Children in Reception also take part in whole class and small group sessions which are tailored to meet their age and stages of development. These group activities include story and rhyme times. Reception also take part in weekly PE, RSHE and Computing sessions.

Assessment and recording systems

Ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process at Weston St Mary. It involves practitioners knowing children's stages of progress, achievements, and interests, to shape teaching and learning experiences for each child. Children are observed in all areas of the curriculum and significant observations are recorded showing personal achievements. Assessment at Weston St Mary does not involve prolonged breaks from interaction with children and does not require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether a child is at the expected level of development, practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own professional judgement against age related expectations. In addition, Read, Write Inc Phonic assessments are carried out on a termly basis to ensure children are grouped accurately.

Statutory Assessments

Children will complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of joining Reception, regardless of when they join the class, unless they have been assessed previously. The RBA is an age-appropriate assessment of mathematics and literacy, communication and language, that is delivered in English. It is clearly linked to the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. The purpose of the RBA is to provide an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) can be created.

On entry to Reception class, the teachers use their professional judgement, based on observations of individuals, to record the starting points for the children's level of development. Children are assessed across the seven areas of learning using the Development Matters age and stage of development bands.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child.
Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels (emerging) across the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Each child's level of development is recorded as Emerging or Expected against the 17 Early Learning Goals. This information is shared with parents as part of children's end of year report.

Safeguarding

At Weston St Mary, we recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when
their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in section three of the Statutory Framework for EYFS (2024) and have regard to the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 'Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance and the 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements and staff receive annual safeguarding training to ensure their knowledge of the safeguarding requirements are up to date. Our full safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in the schools Safeguarding and Health and Safety policies.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow this policy. The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system. This policy will be reviewed regularly and will incorporate the views of all staff concerned. At every review, the policy will be shared with the schools Academy Committee.

Next review: December 2025