



**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**Implementation Date – June 2023**

**Review Date – June 2026**

The Whitchurch Church of England Federation enables both the Whitchurch Church of England Infant & Nursery Academy and the Whitchurch Church of England Junior Academy to work in partnership to develop the common goals and reflective approaches to teaching and learning that will ensure that all our children benefit from a quality education across the primary phase. As a partnership we aim to ensure positive outcomes and improved standards for all.

We strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment in which all children will flourish. Every child is encouraged to care for, respect and appreciate the ultimate worth of others, developing positive relationships as they take their first steps towards independence and becoming responsible, thoughtful and confident adults of the future, making successful contributions to their local and the global community.

### **Introduction:**

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”* Early Years Statutory Framework, 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their reception year (the 31<sup>st</sup> August after the child's fifth birthday).

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Whitchurch CE Infant and Nursery Academy we value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We believe it is important to view the EYFS as a preparation for life and not simply a preparation for the next stage of education.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

At Whitchurch CE Infant and Nursery Academy we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad, balanced curriculum and learning environment that will enable children to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Children will be supported within a safe, happy, caring, fun, stimulating and challenging environment which promotes an ethos of inclusion and entitlement for all.

At Whitchurch CE Infant and Nursery Academy we will:

- Provide a fun, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children.

- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will enable children to make choices and decisions, fostering independence and self confidence that will be the foundation for further learning.
- Value and use what the child can already do, assessing individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the needs of the/ each individual child.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage department offers our children education and experiences based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- It offers a routine and structure that has a range of starting points, content matches the needs of young children, and activities that ensure opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment
- It acknowledges the importance of working with parents and carers

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

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

### **A Unique Child**

At Whitchurch CE Infant and Nursery Academy we recognise that every child is a competent learner who 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 verbal praise and encouragement, to help children to develop a positive attitude to learning. Additional recognition of achievement may include sharing work with peers, indicating what the child has done well, celebrating success with another member of staff and/or parent/ carer, showcasing children's achievements via the academy social media platform (Twitter) and the Federation website.

We value the diversity of individuals within the academy and do not discriminate against any child, treating all fairly regardless of race, religion, gender or ability. All our children matter.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and the confidence to 'have a go';
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;

- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- provide independent learning opportunities which challenge, support and enrich their learning;
- monitoring children's progress and work closely with parents/carers and, when appropriate, outside agencies, to ensure children's needs are met;
- providing children with the opportunity to be involved in the planning process.

### **Positive Relationships**

At Whitchurch CE Infant and Nursery Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

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. In both Nursery and Reception, teachers act as 'Key Person' to their children, with teaching assistants supporting their role.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through/by:

- providing information relating to the Academy / Federation before the child starts our Foundation Stage;
- talking to parents/ carers about their child before their child starts our Foundation Stage;
- inviting all parents/ carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and ensuring there is time to discuss the programme, routines and their child's individual needs;
- understanding that the Induction Programme into our Foundation Stage may need to be adapted to suit the needs of the child, allowing a gradual transition;
- Ensuring children have the opportunity to spend time with the EYFS team and the key worker before starting at the Academy;
- ensuring parents/carers are informed about the curriculum and Academy / Federation life through the Federation website, regular newsletters, letters, Twitter feeds and displays;
- inviting parents/ carers to attend informal information sessions relating to the curriculum e.g. phonics, supporting writing, early maths etc.;
- operating an open door policy for parents/ carers encouraging them to talk about any queries or concerns. Conversely if staff have any concerns about the progress of a child, they will talk with parents/ carers to discuss them;
- regular formal meetings for parents at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress and their next steps for learning;
- Parents receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Reception year. These reports celebrate a child's

achievements and next steps for learning based on the Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

### **Enabling Environments**

At Whitchurch CE Infant and Nursery Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. Staff observe the children, assessing their interests and development before planning activities and experiences. Play based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned teaching opportunities provided by staff. The Foundation Stage learning spaces are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or can be quiet and rest. The rooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Resources support clearly differentiated opportunities for learning that will engage, enhance and challenge children.

Daily access to the indoor and outdoor environment helps ensure that we support learning that reflects the child's interests, passions and abilities. Both Nursery and Reception have their own enclosed outdoor areas. The free flow between 'inside' and 'outside' has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. Children access the Academy Forest School area regularly for a wide range of activities, including digging, mud play, tree climbing, den building, bug hunting and the opportunity for self-challenge in a safe learning environment. This balance of outdoor experiences offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

### **Learning and Development.**

At Whitchurch CE Infant and Nursery Academy we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.

Our staff plan a theme for each half term, with clear learning goals, however this theme may be adapted and developed in order to reflect and follow the children's interests. Short term planning starts with observing children in order to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations feed into planning future teaching activities and child Initiated learning opportunities which take place each day. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.

The planning objectives throughout the EYFS are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. The Early Years Foundation Stage identifies seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years' settings.

The three Prime areas of learning are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Prime Areas of Learning:

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

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

Specific Areas of Learning:

Literacy

Mathematics

Knowledge of the World

Expressive Arts and Design

We deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Children entering our EYFS are observed during their first weeks. This provides baseline information on which to base future planning. Staff make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified next steps and needs. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations with photographic evidence and comments the children have made supporting judgements. These observations are recorded in an online learning journey (Learning book). Staff share the children's next steps for learning regularly. Children's progress is tracked as part of a whole school approach. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) will be completed for each child in the Summer term to make judgments on attainment at the end of the reception year.

### **Welfare**

It is important to us that all children in the Academy are 'safe'. We aim to educate children about boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See the Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy)

*"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."* Early Years Statutory Framework, 2021

At Whitchurch CE Infant and Nursery Academy we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children;
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;

- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose;
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs;
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS team to follow the principles stated in this policy. The EYFS phase leader will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the Senior Leadership Team, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole Academy monitoring schedule.