

# The Whitchurch CE Federation



## Introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage

*"Learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together on a journey down the water. Through an active, reciprocal exchange, teaching can strengthen learning and how to learn."* Malaguzzi, L. 1998

*'Children's development can be quite uneven, especially in the Early Years. Some children concentrate on physical tasks first; others are joyous readers at the age of three. Some need to yell and jump endlessly. Others need to observe from a safe space. The whole child needs to be nourished and all aspects- emotional, social, physical, and cognitive- given a chance to develop at the child's unique pace'* Heather Shumaker.

## Intent

We believe that all children deserve an education which not only focuses on the purposeful acquisition of skills and knowledge, but also one that is rich in wonder and provides memorable experiences that allows their natural creativity and curiosity to flourish.

A holistic approach such as this gives children the best chance to become well-rounded, happy individuals with strong foundations that are rooted in academic success as well as moral and spiritual development.

Our aim is that all children are active members of society and happy curious lifelong learners.

At The Whitchurch CE Federation, we recognise children are unique and join us in Nursery or Reception with different experiences.

We acknowledge the importance of giving our children the best possible start to their education by planning and implementing teaching and learning opportunities that support them to reach their full potential. Our carefully prepared learning environments will allow children's natural creativity and curiosity to develop. We undertake careful observations to understand and follow the children's interests and provide opportunities throughout the Early Years Curriculum to support, consolidate and deepen learning, ensuring that the children meet their next steps.

Our curriculum offers the cultural capital we know our children need so that they can gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they require for success. They can only do that if we embed the right habits for learning through the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning – Play and Exploration, Active Learning and Creative and Critical Thinking. Our aim is that all children leave EYFS with the skills and concepts to become successful in Year One and beyond.

## Implementation

The implementation of our carefully designed curriculum puts the child at the centre of everything we do. We work alongside parents and our local community to understand Individual children's unique starting point. Children can only succeed if we embed the right habits for learning through the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning – Play and Exploration, Active Learning and Creative and Critical Thinking. The curriculum we have designed is therefore their cultural capital as we understand and build on children's early experiences. We give children opportunities to be curious, explore, try new things and experience awe and wonder.

The EYFS Framework specifies requirements for learning and development requirements which cover has seven main areas of learning:

The Prime Areas: -

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

The Specific Areas: -

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts

Our enabling environment is based on the key principles of the Curiosity Approach to learning <https://www.thecuriosityapproach.com/> with high regard being paid to aesthetically pleasing learning spaces.

Warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration. As the pupils move into Reception, we invest time and energy into helping pupils set and reflect on their own goals by aiming high and developing a love of reading, writing and number. This is delivered through a holistic curriculum which maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking following children's interests and ideas. We value imagination and creativity and seek to create a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning through a vibrant continuous indoor and outdoor provision, alongside trips, visits and regular outdoor learning sessions.

Our pupils learn through a balanced mix of child initiated and adult led sessions, planning ensures all children's needs are being met and appropriate next steps for learning are targeted.

The timetable is carefully structured so that children have directed teaching in English, maths and phonics everyday with regular circle time sessions to focus

on Personal, Social and Emotional Development. These sessions are followed by small group work, group work means the teacher can systematically check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback which results in a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning.

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum. Children follow the rigorous and highly successful Read Write Inc. phonics programme; this ensures they meet good outcomes for reading. The systematic approach means children are well prepared for the Year One phonics screening. We actively encourage a love of stories and reading by using high quality texts and planned story sessions this actively promotes comprehension language and intrigue.

To develop vocabulary, we follow the Word Aware programme. This is a method of developing spoken and written vocabulary in all children. It is evidence-based following extensive research by Anna Branagan and Stephen Parsons. This sits alongside Pathways to Write our chosen writing scheme. Pathways is a methodology designed to equip pupils with key skills to move them through the writing process towards their final outcome writing piece. It is built around units of work that follow a mastery approach to the teaching of writing which is based upon high quality text.

Maths is taught through the mastery approach with the White Rose scheme being implemented. The scheme ensures learning steps are sequenced and are methodical. Children demonstrate mathematical reasoning when in play and it is on these firm foundations mathematical competency at Year One and beyond is evident.

Children are provided with plenty of time to engage in 'exploration' throughout the variety of experiences carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the provision. The curriculum is planned for the inside and outside classrooms and equal importance is given to learning in both areas.

The curriculum enables all aspects of our children's development including understanding the world and expressive art and design as well as to promote sustained thinking and active learning. High regard is given to the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and the Academy's core values weave through our daily routines and acts of worship.

## **Impact**

With the successful implementation of our balanced curriculum and a well-structured, safe, active and challenging learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, children develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that enables them to be successful learners. Children are actively engaged in learning and their enjoyment of this learning will be apparent to all.

All children will experience a curriculum that provides, exciting and enriching learning experiences and opportunities for children to learn through educational visits and hands on experiences. Children will more fully appreciate and understand the world around them, experiencing and learning about different cultures, music, dance, art and history.

Children will actively ask questions about the world around them and their learning experiences. They will develop resilience, not fearing making a mistake

but instead embracing this as an opportunity to learn.

Children will leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with a sense of self assurance and identity within our Federation community, our locality and the wider world.

They will view themselves as active capable learners in charge of their own destiny with aspirations to make a positive impact on the world in which they live.

We aspire that the majority of children leave our Early Years will be working at or above the expected level for their age – Good Level of Development.

