



EARLY YEARS SCHOOL POLICY

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This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage at Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

EYFS

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

“Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014”

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A UNIQUE CHILD

At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School 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, 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.

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POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School 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.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending our children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Elm Class is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or be quiet. The class is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Foundation Stage to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that the school and parents work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

AIMS

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School the overarching aim of our EYFS is to help young children achieve these five "Every Child Matters" outcomes.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.

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- Work in partnership with parents and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The early learning goals and the educational programmes are set out in the “Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014” document

There are seven areas of learning and development; however three areas are seen as crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

The three areas are:

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

The three prime areas are also strengthened through development in four other specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School we believe these areas are equally important 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.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Good planning is the key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All practitioners who work in class 1 are involved in this effective process.

The planning within Elm Class is based around a half termly theme. These plans are used as a guide for weekly planning; however they may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. Planning takes in to consideration the three characteristics outlined in “Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014” document

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of long, short and recorded observations, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the EYFS. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents reporting

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the children's progress. There are opportunities throughout the year for parents to meet their child's class teacher on more formal occasions.

In Reception, the children are assessed against the EYFS Profile. This summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements. It summarises children's progress towards the early learning goals which are highlighted as 'emerging' 'expected' and 'exceeding'. It is completed on entry, at the end of Autumn Term, Spring Term and Summer Term by the class teacher in consultation with the Teaching Assistants.

Teachers participate in regular in-house and local cluster group moderation meetings. This provides an external quality assurance and validation of our teacher assessments.

The quality of the taught curriculum is monitored by the Head Teacher, Deputy Head, Key Stage Manager and subject co-ordinators in school through regular lesson observations, pupil interviews, and planning. The Key Stage Manager monitors teaching and learning across the foundation stage each year and analyses EYFS Profile data in conjunction with the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher.

For further information see the Assessment Policy.

STAFFING AND ORGANISATION

At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School we have a mixed reception and year 1 cohort of children. Elm class is organised in to areas so that the children can access the curriculum at an appropriate level to match their ability. There is also a door leading to our outdoor provision. Children have access to outdoors throughout the whole day. The class teacher is supported by a variety of fully qualified Teaching Assistants, students and parent helpers. Staff work as a team and meet formally at least once a week in order to plan effective provision, prepare resources and review assessments.

At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School we engage in ongoing professional development to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding. All practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses; in-service and local cluster group training. Practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to all colleagues.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development." ("Early Years Foundation Stage", Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

"A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces." ("Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014")

We aim to create 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

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are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play, book corner, mark making, listening centre, maths area, computer area, creative area, malleable area, construction, sand and water, small world and puzzles. We aim to provide a reflection of the inside environment outdoors. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

OUR INDUCTION PROCESS

During the summer term, nursery children who will be starting school in September make more formal visits to the reception class as part of the induction process.

A parents meeting is held by the Head Teacher and Foundation Stage Leader in the Summer Term to introduce parents to the school and reception procedures. Through this meeting the school's expectations and routines are communicated. The induction process and reception curriculum are also introduced.

Parents have the opportunity to meet the class teacher and to visit the reception classroom. Parents are given an information pack which outlines the reception curriculum and school routines, along with other necessary documentation.

During the summer term, all prospective children are invited to visit the school for a session to allow them to become familiar with the environment and also the staff.

Transfer records from pre-school settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake. If it is required, visits to other local pre-school settings are made in order to aid the induction process further.

During the induction period in September, children begin part-time sessions before starting fulltime.

This allows:

- children to adjust and feel secure in their new environment
- the practitioners to get to know the children individually and establish good relationships
- the reception teacher to carry out a baseline assessment

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Elm and Beech Class teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School:

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year.
- Elm Class plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer term, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- Elm Class children regularly interact with the Beech Class teacher during worship and other whole school activities during the reception year.
- EYFS Profile are passed on and discussed.
- Elm Class and Beech Class teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July.
- Beech Class includes learning areas similar to Elm Class : e.g. role-play, writing table.

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's

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development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- Out-lining the school's expectations to parents/guardians during the new parents meeting in July.
- In October, we hold a curriculum evening to enable parents to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home.
- Sending home an half termly topic postcard, informing parents of the learning that will be taking place at school, with suggestions of the types of activities that could be carried out at home to support that learning. *This will also be accessed via the new website.*
- Holding parent class visit to outline our Phonics provision and the reception curriculum and to provide an opportunity for asking questions.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Inviting parents to help in the reception class and to accompany children on school visits.
- Encouraging parents to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.
- Encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school.
- Discussing children's individual targets with parents at termly parents' evenings.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

At Wentworth C of E (C) Junior and Infant School we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

For further information see Equal Opportunities Policy.

INCLUSION

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 Education Plans 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.

Progress is monitored and reviewed formally every term. The school's SENCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. For further information see Special Educational Needs Policy and Able, Gifted and Talented Policy.

Policy Agreed by: Governing Body

Effective Date 2014

This policy was reviewed December 2016. Next review, December 2017.