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Date.....31/7/19

Review.....January 2022

Woodford Valley C of E Primary Academy
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This school is committed to creating the ethos in which children can grow towards Christian life, learning and love.

'And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.'
John 34-35

This policy should be read in conjunction with all school policies and in particular: EYFS Play Policy, Teaching and Learning Policies.

1. Background

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum applies to children from the age of three until the end of the Reception year. At Woodford Valley, all children begin school at the start of the Autumn term, although arrangements for delayed entry are discussed on an individual basis. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum forms the basis of the attitudes, values, characteristics and behaviours which prepare children for the remainder of their educational careers.

Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum outlines expectations of pupils' learning and development in age-related bands, according to the EYFS Development Matters Curriculum. Children's learning and development are assessed and tracked against these developmental age bands throughout the year. Impact is then assessed at the end of the Reception Year in June against 'The Early Learning Goals (ELGs),' using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). This reflects each individual's attainment across each of the seven areas of learning. The Early Learning Goals describe the 'Expected' level of attainment for a Reception child at the end of the Reception year. Pupils' progress is assessed under three bands, 'Emerging', 'Expected' or 'Exceeding', against each Early Learning Goal.

Implementation

During the Reception year, children undertake a mixture of child-initiated and adult-initiated play-based learning activities in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance. The environment is regularly reviewed and provision and activities tailored to meet

the interests and needs of the given cohort. Towards the end of the Reception year, the curriculum and timetable develop to reflect and support the transition of pupils from Reception to Year One.

Play forms a central part of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, which reflects how young children use play to develop their knowledge, thinking and relationships. It is a powerful vehicle for learning, in that it promotes and enhances creativity, imagination, problem-solving, social skills, motivation and independence. Children develop social skills, relationships and interactions through their ability to play with adults and their peers, and their interests and knowledge are strongly reflected through their chosen activities. Play is facilitated and supported by adults in order to promote opportunities for children to demonstrate and develop their understanding across the seven areas of learning in the EYFS curriculum.

2. Intent – Aims and Objectives

At Woodford Valley, we strive to promote learning and development within a welcoming, friendly and secure environment which recognises, complements and celebrates children's achievements. We intend to ensure that all children receive a positive start to their school education, by:

- Encouraging home-school partnerships, as well as links with local pre-schools, particularly during the transition period as children prepare to start school;
- Understanding children's prior knowledge and experiences and building upon these to support children's ongoing learning and development;
- Recognising that supporting communication through play is key to pupils developing social skills and therefore learning with and from others;
- Respecting each child as unique, and developing a strong understanding of their interests, learning styles and individual needs;
- Valuing and supporting each individual's characteristics of learning in supporting their 'Learning Journey';
- Closely monitoring pupils' progress against the Development Matters age bands at regular intervals throughout the year;
- Valuing the role of parents as partners and recognising all stakeholders, including the child themselves, in celebrating achievement and in identifying and supporting the next steps in their learning;
- Understanding how pupils' individual needs and interests support planning, provision and assessment for their ongoing development;
- Providing a broad but balanced curriculum across the seven areas of learning;
- Gathering observational evidence on children's progress, using transcripts, annotations, children's work, photographs, videos, commentary and evidence from home;
- Encouraging and promoting children's independence in valuing and guiding child-initiated learning through play;
- Involving pupils in planning for activities and resources used in their environment to stimulate their interests and further their learning;
- Valuing the development of the whole child, socially, emotionally, spiritually and academically, celebrating individual differences;
- Promoting equal opportunities for all children, including children with Special Educational Needs.

3. Implementation and Impact - The Value and Purpose of Play

It is through play that young children are best able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, pursue opportunities for social interaction, and expand on their understanding about the world around them. Play encourages them to work collaboratively and think creatively, further pursue an idea or theme, solve problems, demonstrate their needs and interests and interact effectively with others.

We recognise and reflect in our practice the impact of following values of play:

- Play is a natural way for children to learn;
- It teaches and develops social communication and interaction;
- It develops children's physical skills, including gross and fine motor skills;
- Play allows children to develop their confidence and self-esteem;
- Play provides a window into each child's personality, motivations and interests;
- Play is self-motivated and directed;
- Play can be solitary, paired or grouped;
- It encourages use of, and reflection on, first-hand experiences;
- It allows children to adopt roles and responsibilities, exploring roles, ideas, feelings and relationships;
- Play reflects enjoyment;
- It encourages independent pursuit of interests;
- Play encourages independent use of resources, materials and activities;

The following strategies and practices are implemented to show our intent to support, promote and develop children's play as a means of developing their knowledge and skills across the curriculum:

- Children are offered both play which is free, independent and self-selected, and play which is structured and facilitated and supported by an adult;
- Children are encouraged to pursue solitary, parallel and collaborative play opportunities across the curriculum;
- A range of resources and equipment are used through play to develop pupils' fine and gross motor skills thus developing pre-writing skills;
- A range of resources and books are provided in our provision to develop early reading and phonic skills;
- Children are provided with resources to promote communication and language through aural storytelling, singing familiar songs and playing games;
- Children are provided with a wide range of familiar and novel play activities and resources which offer them opportunities to explore a range of roles, ideas and feelings;
- Equipment and resources are safely stored and displayed and are presented clearly and attractively to promote accessibility by all children and independence in self-selecting activities;
- Activities reflect a range of abilities, needs, interests and stages of development;
- Resources in our provision are adapted over the year to reflect the children's skill progression;
- Children are provided with equal access to suitable resources that they can use to support their learning through play.

4. Intent - Teaching and Learning Style

At Woodford Valley, we deliver a well-planned and resourced curriculum which allows all children to progress and succeed. This is reflected across the seven areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, which identifies 'Prime' and 'Specific' Areas of Learning:

Prime Areas

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others and to form positive relationships and develop respect for others. It requires them to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings and to understand appropriate behaviour in group. It promotes children to have confidence in their own abilities. We promote an inclusive ethos and ensure every child is a valued member of our school community.

Communication and Language

Giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment in order to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves. It requires them to develop the ability to speak and listen in a range of situations with a range of people.

Physical Development

Providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive. It requires them to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement in a range of situations, using a range of equipment and apparatus to develop their gross and fine motor skills. Children are supported to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food, exercise and lifestyle.

Specific Areas

Literacy

Encouraging children to hear, say and recognise sounds and link them to begin to read and write independently. Children are provided with a range of materials and resources to promote their phonic knowledge and development, which in turn supports their interest and ability to read and write.

Mathematics

Knowledge, understanding skills in the areas of number and counting, calculating and shape, space and measures: providing opportunities and resources for children to practise and apply these skills is essential for them to master key skills in counting, calculating and identifying and describing shapes and patterns.

Understanding the World

Developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is crucial for them to describe their observations of events and make links in their learning and understanding of processes and phenomena. It involves guiding children to make sense of the physical world and its communities through opportunities to explore and investigate the environment, people, places and technology.

Expressive Arts and Design

Fostering and developing children's natural creativity and imagination by allowing them opportunities to explore and experiment with a range of media, materials and processes to create planned and spontaneous effects. It encompasses developing their skills and understanding in the areas of art and design, music, movement, dance, drama, role-play and design technology.

Our teaching and learning practices reflect the four key principles of Early Years development which permeate the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum:

The Unique Child

We recognise that each child is unique and individual in their interests, abilities and learning styles. We reflect this through our planning and provision through evaluating our environment and how our pupils learn within it. We strive to ensure that they become capable, confident, resilient and self-assured learners who feel secure, safe and settled within their learning environment.

Positive Relationships

The relationships that children forge with their peers and practitioners in the setting are vital in ensuring they feel secure and content and that they are able to develop to reach their potential. We recognise that parents and carers are key partners in promoting their child's learning and development and strive to maintain strong links with home. We hope to make children confident, positive learners through the relationships that they build with others in our school community.

Enabling Environments

Children learn best in environments in which they feel secure, settled and confident. We ensure our learning environment reflects the needs and interests of children in order that they progress and develop to their potential. The environment is continually evaluated and developed to reflect children's developing abilities and interests and the children are very much involved in this process. We strive to draw upon many resources in order to provide an interesting and stimulating learning environment, drawing upon areas throughout the school environment and within the local community.

Learning and Development

Recognising that each child is unique means understanding that each child learns and develops in different ways and at different rates. Children's learning and development cannot be best supported without recognising the impact of the other three key principles above. All areas of learning and development are interconnected in many ways, and by reflecting and promoting these links through a stimulating environment and rich curriculum, children are enabled to fulfil their potential as young learners.

We encourage pupils to develop positive attitudes and dispositions to learning which motivate them to develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum in a variety of ways. We strive to ensure that pupils develop positive relationships with adults and peers in our school community and understand, respect and value difference. We teach pupils to understand, recognise and communicate their feelings, ideas and opinions, identify those of others in order that they can communicate and interact with others positively and effectively. We present pupils with appropriate levels of challenge in order that they develop persistence and resilience in their learning.

The 'Characteristics of Effective Learning,' which underpin the EYFS curriculum provide both adults and children an insight into how we learn. They enable children to identify and develop key skills and behaviours, such as reflection, motivation, creativity and resilience. They allow us to recognise individuals' learning styles and preferences and how we can reflect and support these in our environment and in our interactions.

5. Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Woodford Valley, the ethos that every child matters is central to our practice. We give our children every opportunity to enjoy learning, achieve their goals and reach their potential. In doing so, we take account of each child's life experiences, needs and interests in planning for their learning and progression. This is reflected by challenging expectations which we set for children in line with their age and stage of development. Planning is differentiated to ensure that it reflects the needs of all learners within the group, including children with Special Educational Needs and Gifted and Talented pupils, pupils with English as an Additional Language, children with disabilities or impairments, and children from all social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds or from different ethnic groups. This is facilitated through the use of tailored resources, programmes or interventions and adult support, including the support of outside agencies, where necessary.

6. Impact - Assessment and Reporting

Thorough assessment is carried out through the regular use of observations, transcripts, children's work, photographs and audio/video, which reflect each individual child's achievements and interests. This progression is celebrated and documented through each individual's 'Learning Journey' document as well as through the classroom environment in the form of resources, activities, areas of interest and displays. We value the vital role and influence of parents and carers as partners in learning and aim to reflect each pupil's learning and development from the perspective of the pupil, staff, and parents and families.

Children are observed across a range of activities, provision and child-led and adult-initiated activities on a day-to-day basis. On entry, this builds a picture of children's prior experiences, interests and strengths and enables staff to tailor the environment and provision to best support pupils' ongoing learning and development across the curriculum. Within the first two to three weeks of entry, pupils are assessed using a school baseline assessment which closely aligns with the EYFS Development Matters outcomes.

Regular observational evidence supports ongoing assessment and tracking against the Development Matters age descriptors. Pupils' attainment is tracked throughout the Reception year to reflect every individual's progress across the seven areas of learning. Observations of children's learning can be readily accessed by parents through our secure online Learning Journey format, 'Tapestry'. Parents are also welcomed into the classroom regularly for 'Stay and Play' and information workshop sessions in order to share practice, provision and celebrate learning and achievement. 'Next Steps' targets are linked with regular observations and formally shared termly with parents at Parents' Evenings. Pupils are assessed against the national compulsory EYFS Profile at the end of Reception, judging their attainment in each of the 17 ELGs, identifying whether they have met the national standard, or 'Good Level of Development', that is expected for their age. Individuals' attainment is shared in the format of an end-of-year report to parents, which also includes a commentary for each individual which exemplifies and celebrates their 'Characteristics of Effective Learning.' These assessments are then used by the Year One teachers to inform their planning and provision on transition into Key Stage One and form the basis of the dialogue between staff in supporting pupils in the transition period.

7. The role of parents

We highly value the vital role which all parents play in their children's learning and development. We recognise the role that parents have in educating their children, through:

- Parent information meetings, visits to the setting and the offer of home visits during the transition period before their child begins at school;
- Pupil visits to the Reception class during the summer term to familiarise them with the environment, routines and staff before starting school;
- Maintaining an open-door policy where parents feel welcomed into the school and classroom at any time to discuss any queries or concerns;
- 'Stay and Play' sessions which invite parents and family members to spend part of the school day with us, playing and working alongside their child, to gain more of an insight into our practice and their child's learning and development
- At-home access to Tapestry online Learning Journey, which allows parents to share in children's learning and development and is readily accessible
- Offering formal opportunities to discuss their child's progress, through parents' evenings
- Regular communication with home, through reading records, class newsletters, school, PTA and Governor newsletters

8. Resources

At Woodford Valley, we plan a stimulating learning environment which allows pupils to pursue their interests both indoors and outdoors, encouraging positive attitudes towards learning. We use resources, materials and activities which reflect the children's understanding, interests, communities and the wider world to ensure a broad curriculum. The children are encouraged to select resources and activities of interest independently with the support of adults to observe, support and develop their play and learning.

We also endeavour to make use of opportunities for additional resources and activities, such as Wiltshire Library Resources, to enable pupils' access to novel or varied resources which appeal to their interests. We also recognise the value of using our local area as a resource for additional outdoor learning. The use of visitors, extra-curricular activities and school trips are also used as key opportunities to expand pupils' interests and extend their learning and help support our broad and balanced curriculum.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all school policies, in particular Child Protection, Whole School Learning and Inclusion Policy, and alongside the Early Years Risk Assessment.

