



Westminster

Primary

School

*Nurturing Minds...
Inspiring Excellence*

Early Years Policy & Guidelines

Date of ratification by trustees: December 2018

Date of review: December 2019

Our School's Mission Statement

This school is committed to developing and maintaining excellent relationships in an open, transparent atmosphere of mutual trust. We provide a stimulating, challenging curriculum within a safe, happy environment.

Our children will gain a lifelong love of learning and a thirst for knowledge, enabling them to achieve the brightest of futures, confidently contributing as citizens of the global community.

Aim

At Westminster Primary, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS '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.'

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured

Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**

Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the Early Learning Goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

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 are the **prime** areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the 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

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

As a team, we write long term and medium-term plans using the EYFS based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at Westminster and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using 'Letters and Sounds', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

The Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A unique child

At Westminster Primary 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 other; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

At Westminster Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments

At Westminster Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the 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.

Learning and Development

At Westminster Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked.

Active learning

Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to a new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

At Westminster Primary School our aims are to ensure:

- A happy, secure, stimulating and safe environment where children are valued for their individuality.

- Children's intellectual, social, spiritual, emotional, physical, cultural and moral development.
- A broad and balanced curriculum that is accessible to every child.
- Activities are exciting, purposeful and relevant for children to become motivated, confident and independent learners.
- There are opportunities for children to be physically and mentally active whilst engaged in first-hand experiences.
- Children have time to be themselves and to be creative.
- Learning happens indoors and outdoors and will be planned for and provided accordingly.

Staff will:

- Work in partnership with parents, carers and outside agencies.
- Promote children's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable.
- Teach skills and knowledge
- Understand that children learn in different ways and at different pace to each other.
- Use rich and varied language to help children develop linguistic structures for thinking.
- Plan both indoor and outdoor provision to maximise opportunities for children's learning.
- Support the transition between settings, promote an inclusive ethos and provide opportunities for each child to become a valued member of that group and community so that a strong self image and self esteem are promoted.

Teaching and learning

We recognise that children learn best through:

- Play
- Being physically active
- First-hand experiences
- Using and exploring their immediate and local environment
- Using investigational opportunities, exploration and problem solving
- Opportunities to practise and develop skills.

- Interacting with children and adults
- Having their interest and acknowledged and valued
- Exposure to a stimulating and relevant curriculum

Play Policy

We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. Play can be enjoyed and challenging. When playing, children behave in different ways. Sometimes, their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the prime and specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.

In a secure environment with effective adult support, children will be able to:

- Explore develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- Practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk to rehearse their feelings
- Take risks and make mistakes
- Think creatively and imaginatively
- Communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems
- Express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

Adults in the setting will support play by:

- Planning and resourcing a stimulating environment
- Supporting children's learning through planned play
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.
- Listening to all forms of children's communication and their ideas and taking these into account when developing play and planning
- Narrating children's play

- Asking questions about children's play

Outdoor Play

At Westminster Primary School we believe that all areas of learning can be addressed equally in the inside and outdoors. Well-planned outdoor play is a key way in which Early Years staff support young children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. It enables children to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors

At Westminster Primary School we aim to:

- Value the outdoor environment and give it status through the active involvement of all practitioners with the children
- Allow access to outside as much as possible
- Provide a rich variety of learning experiences that reflects and extends the indoor environment
- Provide access in most types of weather with children appropriately dressed
- Plan outdoor activities with the same thought and effort as those inside

We aim to provide a stimulating learning environment with clearly defined areas that support children in all 7 areas of learning:

- An attractive and comfortable reading area with a range of books to read
- A writing area with a variety of paper and tools to 'mark-make' or write with
- A mathematical area
- An imaginative role play area
- A variety of creative media such as paint, play dough, reclaimed materials
- Small and large construction equipment
- A computer and other ICT accessories
- An area to promote interest in growing and living things
- A selection of musical instruments to explore sound
- Wet/dry sand plus a variety of equipment
- A range of outdoor/indoor toys, games, puzzles and other equipment
- Interactive displays and artefacts to support topics

All areas will be attractive and have suitable resources so that children are encouraged to use them and engage in purposeful, challenging activities. Resources will be organised in such a way that children are enabled to make informed choices, select independently what they need and take responsibility for clearing away.

Children will be able to relate personally to the resources provided so that they reflect children's varied home and community experiences; reflect the multi-cultural nature of the UK and avoid gender stereotyping.

Assessment and record keeping

Before a child begins in the Foundation Stage, we aim to use the expertise of the child's parents and carers to help inform baseline information. The Early Years staff gathers this essential information during home visits and visits to the class where the child's entry profile can be discussed. After entering the Foundation Stage, the children are closely observed for 6 weeks and this is collated to form an on-entry baseline. Observational evidence allows us to match children to ages and stages in the Nursery and Reception. This level is tracked 3 times during the year.

A range of assessment strategies will be used to ensure that the next steps in children's learning are appropriately planned in order to help children make progress. All early years' staff are involved in collecting assessment observations. All samples should be accompanied by a dated observation or explanation recording the context and significance of the sample e.g. how, when and where the activity occurred, whether it was a self-initiated or an adult-led activity.

Evidence for assessment is collected in the following ways:

- Systematic short and narrative observations
- Teacher assessments
- Annotated work and photographs
- Learning journals
- Termly tracking
- End of year reports

Westminster Primary School
Early Years Foundation stage policy

Equal opportunities

Aims

- To ensure that no children is excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, religion, culture, family background, disability, gender, home, language, special educational needs or ability
- To ensure that all the children feel secure, included and valued
- To establish feelings of respect and trust with all children and their parents or carers
- To treat each child as an individual and provide equality of opportunity
- To encourage self-confidence and a positive approach to learning in all children.

During the school visit we will talk to the child and the parent about the child's ethnic, religious and cultural heritage and experiences at home. Staff will use this information when planning and carrying out activities within the Foundation area to ensure that familiar experiences are used as starting points for learning

When planning, setting up and altering the rooms, outdoor areas, displays and equipment, the staff will aim to create an environment that encourages a positive attitude to learning. This will include:

1. Keeping the environment free from discriminatory practice or stereotypical images
2. Valuing the local community and environment as a source of learning opportunities
3. Using displays, resources and equipment that reflect the community in which the children live as well as the wider world.

The curriculum will include activities to encourage children to respect their own cultural background and beliefs and those of other people. These will include:

1. Activities relating to a wide range of religious, ethnic and cultural festivals
2. Telling stories, listening to music and looking at pictures and videos from a range of cultures and religions
3. Role play activities that reflect a variety of cultures.

Discussions with and between the children about the similarities and differences in their experiences and the reasons for those similarities and differences.

We will ensure that all children are given support to participate in activities, experiences, visits and discussions and to ensure that all children are listened to carefully and with respect.

We will carefully consider the need for equality of opportunity when planning activities and experiences. When necessary we will modify activities or provide equipment or materials to ensure children are not excluded.

Partnership with Parents

At Westminster Primary School we firmly believe that children get the best out of their education when parents/carers and school staff work together. We involve parents in their children's education in many ways:

- Home visits
- New parents meeting
- Familiarisation visits (in the term before a child is due to start)
- Sharing special books at home
- Informal meetings
- Termly parent teacher meetings
- Termly 'topic' outline/newsletter to inform parents of planned medium term curriculum to ensure that they are actively involved
- Parental help in classroom, with visits, translating for other parents, reading stories in home languages

- End of year reports
- Curriculum workshops

Managing transition

We believe that the child's initial experience of entering the Foundation Stage at Westminster Primary School must be positive, inclusive and respectful of home experience. We consider this an important first step towards developing the future partnership between school, parent and children. We acknowledge the transition can be both an exciting and challenging time for children for children and parents and carers alike. We hope to provide a welcoming, happy and secure environment which minimises disruption as the child moves through the Foundation Stage and into Key Stage 1.

New parents Meeting

Parents are invited to a Nursery or Reception new parents meeting during the summer term prior to their child being admitted. This is an opportunity for parents to meet the Head Teacher. Short presentations are given to introduce the Foundation Stage Curriculum and talk to staff. They also receive a welcome pack which includes:

- Nursery/Reception Prospectus
- Start dates
- Admission Form
- Medical Forms
- School Forms
- Entry profile for parents to complete about their child
- Curriculum map
- Example of lunch menus (reception only)
- Induction packs given to the children to take home over summer holidays (whiteboard, pen, wax crayons, play dough, pencil crayons and scissors)

Class Visits

Parents and children can visit their nursery or reception class before they start so the children can be welcomed and begin to familiarise themselves with their new environment and meet the staff. They are encouraged to play games with others to meet new friends so they can quickly recognise a friendly face as they come on their first day.

Home visits

Home visits provide an opportunity for one-to-one interaction with the family. They should enable an exchange of information between parents, early years' staff and children. The visit also provides a starting point for practitioners to understand family background, including cultural background.

For children, a visit carried out by 'their' teacher shows that they are important, and means that some faces will be familiar when they start school.

For parents, a home visit provides an opportunity to talk about their child and the school, to voice concerns, to clear up misunderstandings, and to lessen worries and fears.

For parents and children, a visit gives them the opportunity to meet early years' staff in a safe environment, where they feel confident and at ease.

For early years' staff, a visit provides the opportunity to:

- Establish early, a positive contact
- See children in their own familiar settings
- Meet other family members, people and pets who are important to the children.
- Understand the problems that children might encounter at school

The teacher talks to the parent/carer and gathers vital information about the child's previous experiences, cultural background, likes and dislikes, preferred activities, health/medical concerns and possible special educational needs. The teacher also gathers a view of the parent/carers expectations of what they hope their child will

gain from their time at Westminster Primary School. Parents are free to ask the staff any questions and help can be given in completing admission and entry profile forms.

Settling in procedures

To enable children to settle in smoothly, Nursery and Reception stagger entry dates. Specific details are given in the new parents pack. Children who are under 5 in Reception may go part time if they are finding it difficult to cope with a full day. The decision will be made in consultation with the child's parents, Early Years staff and the Head Teacher.

Parent- teacher consultations

Parents have the opportunity to discuss how their child has settled into their class and to discuss their progress and joint strategies between home and school. These meetings are scheduled once per term. Parents/carers are also able to make appointments with Foundation Stage Staff if they have other matters they wish to discuss. Written reports on progress are produced at the end of Summer Term.

Reception to year 1

To make this transition as smooth as possible, it is ideal if Year 1 teachers spend more time in Reception during the summer term to meet the children. The children also get the opportunity to visit their new classroom and teacher as a class for an introductory session towards the end of the summer term. We ensure that Year 1 staff adopt similar routines, expectations and activities found in Reception. Resources are available to enable children in Year 1 to experience play based activities such as sand and water play, role play, construction and outdoor learning. Reception staff and Year 1 staff meet to discuss each child's learning and end of year report and any transitional issues which may arise. The Year 1 Curriculum includes a balance of child initiated learning and teacher led practical activities.

EYFS Policy for the use of cameras and mobile phones

Cameras

- Photographs are taken for the purpose of recording a child or group of children participating in activities or celebrating their achievements this is an effective form of recording their progression in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They may also be used on our website and/or by the local press with permission from the parents.
- However, it is essential that photographs are taken and stored appropriately to safeguard the children in our care.
- Only the designated cameras are to be used to take any photo within the setting or on outings.
- Images taken on this camera must be deemed suitable without putting the child/children in any compromising positions that could cause embarrassment or distress.
- All staff are responsible for the location of the camera; this should be placed within the filing cabinet in the classroom at the end of the day.
- Images taken and stored on the camera must be downloaded as soon as possible, ideally once a week.
- Photographs should then be distributed to members of staff (keyworkers) to record in children's learning journals.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns

Mobile phones

- Personal mobile phones and video recorders cannot be used when in the presence of children either on school premises or when on outings
- All mobile phones must be stored securely within the setting during contact time with the children. (this includes staff, visitors, volunteers and students)
- Personal calls may be made in non-contact time with the children or in the staffroom
- Personal mobiles, cameras or video recorders should not be used to record classroom activities. Only school equipment should be used

- All telephone contact with Parent/Carers must be made on the school telephone
- During school outings nominated staff will have access to the school mobile which can be used in an emergency or for contact purposes
- In the case of school productions, Parents/Carers are permitted to take photographs of their own children in accordance with school protocols

Monitoring and Review:

It is the responsibility of all staff to adhere to this policy. It will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.