

Newbold School

Early Years Foundation Policy

Date Reviewed: August 2023 by M. Jennings.

To be ratified by the Board of Governors: Autumn Term 2023/24

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in our Willow class - Foundation One class (Pre-School), F1 Cherry class* and Cherry class - Foundation Two (Reception) class. These children are aged 3-5 years. Willow and Willow 2 children are eligible for Government funding (15 and 30 hours).

Aim:

At Newbold School 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, inside and outside, 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.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and Development Matters (effective 2021) as a tool to record and analyse children's progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We adopt 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**

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, understanding the importance of play as the vehicle for learning. This curriculum develops skills which are linked to the whole school curriculum to ensure the continuation of skills and knowledge progression in all areas/subjects.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.

- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult - linked to themes within our curriculum.
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors
- *Support ALL children to develop their full potential by having an additional group of children (referred to as F1 Cherry). Eligible 4 year olds attend Cherry class but are 4 year old funded children who have more tailored learning in phonics, literacy and maths due to achieving highly in all developmental areas. This can start from the Spring term each year, only for pupils who are developmentally and holistically ready to move across.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on topics and 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. The skills learnt help children make ongoing progress and them well for the next academic year.

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.

These **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.**

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 during child-led activities.

Our planning approach covers a variety of topics in which the children are interested. The enabling environment is enhanced and the children's learning is developed by skilfully interacting and encouraging them to explore, problem solve and develop skills. Our ethos is:

let the children choose what to do and practitioners join them in their pursuits and support them. Remaining in-the-moment is more beneficial in meeting the needs of children as their interests are met in the here-and-now. The child's voice is respected and their requests are followed as much as possible.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Foundation One (Willow class) 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 Newbold School 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 daily phonics sessions encompassing listening, making and exploring sounds. Jolly Phonics is a fun and child centred approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics. In Foundation One (Willow class), phase one phonics is taught as a group, then the class is split into 2-3 ability groups as the academic year progresses. These sessions are short and interactive, and cover the letter groups in order. In Foundation Two (Cherry class), some skills are taught explicitly in groups or one-to-one, as appropriate to the child's needs and ability. Teaching in Cherry class/Willow 2 class includes phonics to help the children learn to read words by blending sounds, read and write tricky words, and write simple phrases/sentences, as well as maths and literacy (writing). Our weekly topics and stories help all children develop their literacy comprehension skills and communication/language skills. New learnt vocabulary is re-visited and displayed throughout the week.

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'. The ways in which children engage with other children and their environment underpin learning and development across all areas. We encourage children to develop a positive mindset and to think critically, supporting them to develop into effective and motivated learners. Our timetables detail all the scheduled adult-led activities we participate in each week and include worship, PE, movement in music, Toast Tuesday, Forest School as well as topic related discussions/activities and sessions (such as drama, cooking, computing games).

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning. We record some observations using an online learning journey system (Tapestry). This secure system shares observations and photos with the parents. All parents have given their permission and have signed our confidentiality agreement to adhere to privacy regulations. We take observation notes and photos which are displayed in class and also added into subject scrapbooks, as well as shared on our school weekly newsletter. Special creations are added into the child's learning journal. Parents can share home learning and significant events with us via our Tapestry system to encourage working-in-partnership with parents. We discuss and share their child's progress and next steps throughout the year. Parents receive baseline feedback, as well as termly feedback (via written reports or parent meetings), and we receive feedback from parents. Our open-door policy ensures parents can discuss anything with us on a daily basis at drop off and pick-up times, or during organised meetings.

At the end of every term, each child's progress is tabulated and shared with the Head Teacher using our professional judgement.

Within the final term of the academic year, we provide parents with a school report based on their child's development and the characteristics of their learning. In Foundation Two (Cherry class), the progress is shown against each of the 17 Early Learning Goals. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher in preparation for learning to commence in Year 1.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including healthy fruit snack-times and teaching the importance of oral health and exercise. We follow set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Newbold School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. The Early Years SENCO is Mrs Jennings, with the valued support of Mrs Murphy. See our separate policies.

Parents as Partners and the Wider context

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible. We work closely with the Local Authority to ensure best practice is always provided.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on walks around Newbold college grounds, having weekly Forest School sessions in the Newbold college wooded grounds, and inviting members of the community into our setting. We also have a summer trip outing, as well as visits to Popeswood Meadow.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend an introductory session to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. We also perform a home visit to help form a positive relationship in the comfort of their own home, as well as find out essential background information. An information pack is provided and discussed.

In the final term of Foundation One (Willow class), transition arrangements will be made if the child is leaving the school. A handover meeting is our priority and relevant paperwork is completed and shared (including any safeguarding concerns).

In the final term of Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Please see our risk assessment and relevant policies for further details and information.

M. Jennings

Mrs M Jennings
August 2023