

EYFS Policy



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Whale Hill Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Our Vision and Values for EYFS at Whale Hill – our intent](#)
3. [The EYFS Curriculum, including Characteristics for Effective Teaching and Learning – our intent](#)
 - Prime areas
 - Specific areas
 - Educational Programmes
 - Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning
4. [Planning, Teaching, Learning and Play in the Foundation Stage – our implementation](#)
 - Planning process
 - Planning our environments
5. [Monitoring, Assessment, record keeping and reporting – our impact](#)
 - At the start of the year
 - National Baseline Assessment (NBA)
 - Throughout the year
 - At the end of the year
 - Seesaw
6. [Inclusion at the Foundation Stage](#)
7. [Transition](#)
 - Transition into Nursery
 - Transition into Reception
 - Transition into Year 1
8. [Safeguarding](#)
 - Key Workers
 - Keeping safe
 - Ratios
 - Good health
 - Mealtimes
 - Toileting/toilet training
 - Paediatric first aid (PFA)
9. [Working in partnership](#)
 - The role of parents

1 - Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) extends from 0-5 years. Entry into our Foundation Stage (Nursery) is in the Autumn term after the child turns 3 and ends at the end of the Reception year.

At Whale Hill, we offer 15 hours places (part-time) in Nursery for children aged 3 or 4 under the 'universal offer'. These 15 hours are provided over 5 sessions – either 8:30-11:30 or 12:15-3:15. Most of our Nursery children start as N2 age (4 years olds), with a small number of N1 (3 year olds) each academic year.

From September 2025, we are able to offer some 30 hours (full-time) Nursery places to parents and carers who meet the eligibility criteria set out by the government. These places are limited and offered on eligibility and then a first come, first served basis.

Entry into our primary school is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are 5 (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).

The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling. At Whale Hill we follow the government 'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework'.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following 'Principles of the EYFS':

"A Unique Child" – we build on what our children already know and can do.

"Positive Relationships" - our children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving, secure and respectful relationships.

"Enabling Environments" – our children enjoy a rich and stimulating environment which supports their learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure, safe yet challenging indoor and outdoor areas.

"Learning and Developing" – we provide a variety of opportunities for our children to develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

2 - Our Vision and Values for EYFS at Whale Hill – our intent

At Whale Hill we recognise that:

Development can only
take place when children are
actively involved,
when they are occupied with a
high, non-stop degree of concentration,
when they are interested, when they
GIVE THEMSELVES completely,
when they use all their
(mental)
abilities
to invent and
MAKE new things
and when this gives them a high degree of
satisfaction and pleasure.

Terre Laveurs

Our curriculum in the EYFS aims to:

- establish the foundations that underpin all future learning;
- place speech, language and communication at the heart of learning;
- promote and develop personal, social and emotional well-being;
- encourage the development of self-confidence and positive self-awareness;
- ensure that our children have positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning;
- develop positive behaviour and social interaction skills;
- promote healthy and safe physical development;
- enable children to develop the skills of attention, concentration and persistence;
- lay the foundations for developing reading and writing;
- develop early mathematical skills and concepts;
- develop an understanding of the world in which children live;
- enable children to be creative in their responses to their world and in their development of skills;
- encourage children to develop their imagination.

3 - The EYFS Curriculum, including Characteristics for Effective Teaching and Learning – our intent

The EYFS Curriculum, which precedes the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1-4 (5 to 16 years), consists of seven areas of learning - three “Prime” and four “Specific”. These seven areas of learning and development shape educational programmes in EYFS. All the areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

The ‘**Prime areas**’ are fundamental, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas. They are:

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

The ‘**Specific areas**’ include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. They are:

- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Educational Programmes

The ‘Educational Programmes’ for EYFS (taken from the Statutory Framework for the EYFS, September 2025) are as follows:

Communication and Language

The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children’s language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children’s personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive 9 relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The

frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning (CoETL)

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning and the prime and specific Areas of Learning and Development are all interconnected. The focus of the CoETL is on how children learn rather than what they learn i.e. process over outcome. Underpinning the CoETL is the understanding that during their earliest years, children form attitudes about learning that will last a lifetime.

At Whale Hill, we ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world around them. They practise and build on their own ideas and those presented to them. They learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own and how to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Active learning- Children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need 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.

Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between them and develop strategies for doing things. Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning. This learning allows children to develop their abilities to play and explore, take an active role and think creatively.

4 - Planning, Teaching, Learning and Play in the Foundation Stage – our implementation

At Whale Hill Primary School the Educational Programmes are delivered through the 7 areas of learning. Planning is divided into long term, medium term, and short term.

- Long term plans state the topics to be covered each year and show each strand of the curriculum. Where possible we make links with the subject areas taught in the rest of school.
- Medium term plans illustrate objectives being taught each term including key core texts.
- Short term or weekly plans show specific activities and planned for objectives for the cohort of children. These will include a variety of adult-led activities and provision to inspire and support child-led learning. Staff ensure that all children are encouraged to experience all areas of activity throughout the week. This is carefully monitored and altered as the year progresses and we begin to support children's transition into Year One.

Planning Process

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 practise and is informed through observations we make of the children within our environment. All staff who are in the EYFS team are involved in the process of planning to consider current interests, development, and learning needs within the cohort.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests but also reflects that some of our children have had limited experiences before joining our school. These plans are used by the whole team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs and interest of the children which helps create a high level of motivation for their learning.

Planning our environments

At Whale Hill Primary School we are fortunate to have a large nursery, 2 Reception classrooms, shared areas and a wonderful outside environment. Our classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn safely and securely. Each classroom has defined learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. These areas can be active, quiet, creative, imaginative etc. The shared areas promote the importance of early reading and language – groups read here or work on their speaking and language skills.

The outside area is important within our Foundation Stage and children access this area in small groups (small groups from each class at the same time or as a class). Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when inside. As well as offering opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement and promoting a sense of well-being. They can explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources for both indoor and outdoor environments, enabling children to develop all areas of their learning within both environments.

5 - Monitoring, assessment, record keeping and reporting – our impact

At the start of the year

During the first term in Nursery and Reception, class teachers assess the ability of each child using our own baseline assessments. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. Baseline assessments are made watching the children play, by completing play-based activities with them and by seeing what they know. Staff will talk with parents as appropriate/when needed to discuss a child's strengths or areas for development. Parents will also be invited into school during the Autumn term for a parent's evening appointment.

National Baseline Assessment (NBA)

Since September 2021, schools have been required to complete a national, statutory 'Reception Baseline'. This is completed alongside our own teacher devised baseline activities. The statutory baseline is completed with each child individually and will usually take 20 minutes. The activities will be play based and will use resources and pictures. Teachers will ask the children different questions and the children will be expected to point, show or say their answer. Teachers use an ipad to record a yes/no answer for each activity. The baseline assessment activities are 'routed'; this means that it prevents the children accessing too many activities where they may be unsuccessful. (I.e. the assessment stops if it becomes too difficult). All children must complete the NBA. Scores for each child are automatically calculated and sent to the Standards and Testing Authority (STA). School does not have access to these scores/data until the cohort reach Year 6, when the data can be used as a progress measure. This means we will be unable to discuss the scores/data from the NBA.

Throughout the year

Assessment in the foundation stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence, and planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves all staff within the EYFS setting. The collection of assessment data allows staff to adapt planning to suit the needs of the cohort.

At Whale Hill, we keep progress records and learning journals, to include some examples of children's work, as a range of evidence to be shared with parents at each parent consultation meeting. Tracking grids are updated at key points throughout EYFS and moderated carefully by Early Years staff. The data collected is shared with Senior Leadership Team.

At the end of the year

End of year assessments in Nursery are shared with the next class teacher and with parents during parent consultation meetings and in the child's end of year report.

At the end of Reception the EYFS requires practitioners to complete the Foundation Stage Profile. The Foundation Stage Profile consists of Early Learning Goals. The Early Learning Goals (ELG) are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - ELG – Self Regulation
 - ELG – Managing Self
 - ELG – Building Relationships
- Communication and Language
 - ELG - Listening, Attention and Concentration

ELG - Speaking

- Physical Development
 - ELG – Gross Motor Skills
 - ELG – Fine Motor Skills
- Mathematics
 - ELG – Number
 - ELG – Numerical Patterns
- Literacy
 - ELG – Comprehension
 - ELG – Word Reading
 - ELG – Writing
- Understanding the world
 - ELG – Past and Present
 - ELG – People, Culture and Communities
 - ELG – The Natural World
- Expressive arts and design
 - ELG – Creating with materials
 - ELG – Being Imaginative and Expressive

The Profile is an assessment tool for teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage and to summarise the progress made by individuals towards the Early Learning Goals. During the summer term a summary of these assessments are sent to the local authority for analysis. This data is also shared with the next teacher and with parents during parent consultation meetings and in the child's end of year report.

Also see the school 'Assessment policy'.

Seesaw

Seesaw is used to create, and share observations made of the children's learning and as a communication tool for parents. We appreciate that children are constantly learning and that this is not specific to the hours within a school day. We value observations shared from home of children's life experiences and hobbies and activities, which ultimately contribute to their overall learning.

Permission is obtained from parents upon starting Reception in line with meeting GDPR guidance and expectations.

6 - Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations matched to the needs of our children, so that our children work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We help them to do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- seeking advice from the school SENDCo and other professionals as needed;
- employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress, and providing support (such as speech therapy) as necessary.

Please also see the school 'SEND/Inclusion policy'

7 – Transition

Transition into Nursery

At Whale Hill we recognise that a child's first experiences of Nursery are often the first time that they have spent time away from their parents/carers – and that this can sometimes be a difficult time for parents/carers too. Nursery children usually start in the Autumn term. There are 2 information meetings held for parents; 1 in the Summer term prior to children starting in the Autumn term and 1 early in the Spring term for children starting from January onwards. In these meetings Nursery staff will share important information and will answer any questions that parents may have. Parents will also be asked to complete important paperwork that school needs before children start at Whale Hill. Parents and children are also invited into Nursery in small groups (up to 10 children) to stay and play before they start formally in Nursery.

Transition into Reception

New reception parents and their child are invited to attend a workshop in the summer term to provide them with essential information for the next academic year.

During the summer term prior to the children starting school the following September, the transition process will include the following:

- Your child's class teacher will visit your child in nursery to meet them and discuss your child as a learner with staff.
- Pictures of staff and social stories will be provided in order to support transition.
- Children will have transition visits in their new class in the summer term (during their normal Nursery session) in order to ensure they become familiar with staff, routines, and environments before settling into a full-time start.

Transition into Year 1

During the summer term we begin to prepare children for transition into Year 1 and the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

We have put provision and opportunities in place to support this transition period. These include:

- Story sessions held by their new class teacher and a question and answer opportunity to get to know them better.
- A 'Meet your new teacher' days as part of whole school transition.
- A thorough hand-over between teachers ahead of the summer holiday.
- Early Years staff to visit children into their new environment, where needed, during the first week of year one.

8 – Safeguarding

At Whale Hill, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025.

Key Workers

Children are assigned 'Key Workers' during their time in EYFS. Take from the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021, a Key Worker's role is:

'to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate'.

At Whale Hill, Key Workers are as follows for 2025/26:

Nursery	Mrs Newlands (Teacher) Mrs Rudd (Teacher) Mrs Brown (TA) Mrs Hellon (TA) Mrs Jones (TA) Mrs Wilkinson (TA)
Reception – Blue	Mrs Gordon (Teacher) Mrs Gavaghan (TA) Mrs Hoe (TA)
Reception – Red	Mrs Dawson (Teacher) Mrs Bowstead (TA)

The Key Workers work closely with the children to ensure that they settle well into school and can achieve their full potential. Key workers also foster good relationships with parents and carers.

Keeping Safe

In the Early Years we recognise the importance that all children are 'safe'. Our curriculum and learning environments help children to learn boundaries, rules and limits and aim to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards.

In EYFS we follow 'The Whale Hill Way' as part of our behaviour policy and children learn how to 'Be safe' right from when they start at our school. Our PSHE scheme also explicitly teaches the children about keeping safe. We also regularly have visits or assemblies from external sources such as the police and fire service.

Also see the school 'Behaviour policy' and the 'EYFS Safeguarding policy'.

Ratios

Staffing of EYFS meets the requirements stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025.

This is as follows:

'For children aged three and over in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained schools:

- *There must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children;*
- *At least one member of staff must be a school teacher as defined by section 122 of the Education Act 2002;*
- *At least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification or have received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status.*

Reception classes in maintained schools and academies are subject to infant class size legislation, which is limited to 30 pupils per school teacher.'

Good Health

All children are provided with a healthy snack (fruit) each day. In Nursery children are offered milk every day at snack time when they have fruit. All children have access to water.

As part of our Science and PE curriculum we cover keeping healthy and making healthy choices, the importance of exercise, the importance of hand washing and looking after our teeth.

Before starting at Whale Hill, staff discuss with parents/carers any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances. When required, staff ensure that parents/carers liaise with the catering staff in the school kitchen.

School also ensure that parents/carers share any special health requirements or needs that their child may have. School works closely with health professionals to ensure that training is arranged as needed so that staff are equipped to deal with any medical need.

Mealtimes

Children in Nursery who stay for 30 hours bring a packed lunch which is provided by parents/carers. Children in Reception are offered a daily healthy school meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meal scheme. Children are encouraged to try different and new foods and we work hard with parents and children to make school lunch time a positive experience. Some children don't have a school meal, preferring a packed lunch instead. Our school shares healthy packed lunch suggestions with all parents/carers.

Also see the school 'Healthy Eating guidance'

All children are supervised when eating and at least one member of staff holds a Paediatric first aid qualification (as required by the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025).

Toileting/toilet training

We recognise that some children may struggle with toileting during their time in EYFS. We support and work with parents and their child to toilet train, referring to the school nurse if appropriate.

Also see the 'EYFS Continence and Changing Policy'.

Paediatric first aid (PFA)

The Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025 states that;

'At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate (PFA) must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings.'

At Whale Hill, we have several members of EYFS staff that hold a current PFA qualification. The list of qualified staff is kept under review and staff are trained as part of the school's rolling training programme.

9 - Working in partnership

We highly place the benefits of working in partnership have a huge impact on the effectiveness of our EYFS setting.

We value our partnerships and endeavour to actively maintain these by sharing information, ideas, expertise, and our knowledge within our team and with parents, carers, colleagues, and other professionals.

Within our role of enabling partnerships we:

- Meet regularly as an EYFS team to discuss assessments, planning, individual children, research
- Hold regular parent workshops on relevant areas of their children's development e.g. maths, reading, phonics
- Work closely with SRAT moderation groups to share practice and support colleagues across the local area.
- We moderate work with Nursery and Year 1
- Attend moderation provided by the local Authority and take part in a cycle of external moderations.

The role of parents

We believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- meeting with and talking to parents before their child starts at Whale Hill;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts Nursery and then again when their child starts Reception class;
- arranging for a staggered start to Nursery (where appropriate) over the first few weeks of term, so that the teacher can welcome each child and parent into our school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- providing Seesaw access codes so that parents can see what their child is doing at school. The codes also allow parents to share home learning with school.
- Offering parent consultation meetings at key point throughout the year.
- Mid year and end of year reports