



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Wellgate Primary School

Introduction

At Wellgate Primary School we want our children to become enthusiastic, creative and active learners. The first step on this journey is within the Foundation Stage.

‘Every child deserves the best possible to start to life in order for them to fulfil their potential. Children develop rapidly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age 5 have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. A strong, parent partnership will provide the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’ (EYFS 2012)

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS principles which guide the effective work of all practitioners are grouped into four themes:

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

The seven areas of learning are divided into three **prime** areas and four **specific** areas. These are form the foundation of a child’s readiness for school and their future progress as they move into the National Curriculum.

The **prime areas** are time sensitive and need to be in place between 3 and 5 years of ages: they are universal and independent of specific areas of learning.

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

Children cannot master skills within the **specific areas** without developing the prime areas. The specific areas strengthen the prime areas:

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

The **Characteristics of Effective Learning** in all seven areas of learning are interconnected. The way in which a child engages with other people and their environment underpin learning and development and support children in becoming effective and motivated learners.

- Playing & Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating & Thinking Critically

Provision

- Our EYFS is organised into two full time Foundation 2 Classes and 1 part time (morning or afternoon sessions) Foundation 1 class. Each class teacher is the nominated Key Person for individual children, although all staff are expected to develop positive and constructive relationships with all children.
- We have a team of highly qualified, dedicated, professional and caring Early Years teachers, and Teaching Assistants who plan and work closely together to provide a high quality curriculum.
- We value our parent partnership with an open door policy and regular opportunities to engage parents in activities.
- We continue to monitor the quality and organisation of our provision to provide the best possible learning opportunities for all children.
- Resources are well organised, clearly labelled and accessible.
- Our teams moderate their judgements both internally and with other professionals, using recommended non-statutory materials, to ensure accurate observations are made which contribute to our knowledge of the learning journey of individual children.

Teaching Strategies

We ensure that there is a balance adult-led and child-initiated activity across the day. We believe that even during child-initiated activities the adults' role and interaction with the children is essential as this helps to build the children's understanding and so guides new learning. The role of the adult is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the children are doing, either through participation in the children's game or encouraging the children to participate or complete a task with the adult. The children are taught through a number of different strategies that are both Early Years based as well as direct teaching and other more investigative project based learning approaches.

Play

Learning through play is an important and integral part of the Early Years curriculum and classroom. We believe that children learn best from activities and experience that interest and inspire them. We use prior assessment of the children's skills and knowledge, as well as the project and immersion as the starting points for these experiences. The project and immersive feel of the environment inspires the children to learn and investigate the experiences and opportunities around them. We carefully plan the environment and opportunities within this environment to reflect on what has interested the children, making sure that we provide opportunities to extend and practice the skills they have learned during the project or through direct teaching. We ensure that each of the different areas of learning are represented in the environment and provide different experiences and opportunities to learn. We believe it is important that adult take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Achieving and maintaining the balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities is very important to us.

Direct teaching

- In FS1 we have opportunities throughout the week in which each child is encouraged to participate in an activity led by the teacher or Teaching Assistant. Children in FS1 participate in a daily phonics session, suitable for their age and stage, with each child gaining experience of Phase 1 letters and sounds activities to develop their phonemic awareness. They also have daily counting and number experiences, allowing the children to experience number each and every day.
- In FS2, the children participate in daily phonics sessions using the Read Write Inc. Phonics scheme. Once the children have developed a secure knowledge of sounds and can manipulate them with confidence, their Read Write Inc. session incorporates Guided Reading. Children in FS2 also have Maths Mind which aims to rehearse counting skills and reinforce previously taught skills. All direct taught sessions are carefully planned and tailored for each group of learners, using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and ability. Planning is changed and tailored regularly and in response to the result of taught sessions, ensuring all teaching and learning is relevant and challenging for each child.

Outdoor Provision (See separate policy)

At Wellgate Primary School we recognise the importance of Outdoor play in the development of young children.

Children will have access to outdoor provision for a substantial part of each session. All children will be encouraged to take part in the full range of outdoor experiences. Resources outdoors and indoors will be organised similarly to enable children to be independent and take responsibility for their own environment. Planning incorporates outdoor activities for all weathers including some weather dependent activities.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure learning environment and provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risk. We promote a healthy lifestyle by providing fresh fruit for the children daily and encourage them to make independent healthy choices about what they eat.

Transition (See EYFS Transition Policy)

At Wellgate Primary School we pride ourselves in making the key transition points smooth for all children.

- All children are visited at home before starting in our Nursery.
- They visit Nursery with parents/carers before attending full sessions.
- The transition between F1 and F2 is calm, happy and successful. The transition period at the end of the summer term allows F1 children to experience 'big school' and get to know Foundation 2 staff.
- Foundation 2 staff visits children from other Foundation 1 settings in their own environments before they are invited to join us during the transition period.

- All children are invited to stay for lunch with their parents as part of the transition process.
- Foundation 2 work closely with Year 1 staff so that the transition into National Curriculum meets the needs of all children.

Observation & Planning

At Wellgate Primary School we hold the individual child at the centre of our planning. This is achieved through detailed observation and assessment which is the heart of effective early years practice.

Staff achieve this through:

- Observing children as they interact in their play, everyday activities, child-initiated activities and planned adult led activities.
- Sharing information from parents about the children's development at home.
- Comparing observations made in school with the Early Years Outcomes and identifying the relevant stage on the developmental pathway and so recognising the next steps necessary in a child's learning.
- Children's progress is recorded using the Early Excellence Assessment Tracker.
- Collating observations in each child's electronic Individual Learning Journey which enables us to measure the progress of children across all area of learning and identify next steps for each child.
- Considering all the information gathered about children and using it effectively to plan a challenging and inspiring range of activities to promote all areas of learning.

Assessment

In accordance with requirements of the EYFS statutory framework Wellgate Primary School completes and submits the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for each child in the Summer Term of the Foundation 2 Year. This is measured against the 17 Early Learning Goals. This provides parents/carers and practitioners with a clear picture of each child's development, knowledge, understanding and abilities as well as their progress against expected levels. It, furthermore, prepares Year 1 staff for individual children's school readiness, needs and agreed next steps. This information is tracked using the Early Excellence Assessment Tracking which allows staff to measure progress and attainment against each child's Age Related Expectations.

Parents/Carers are free to share their child's Early Years Profile at any time. Teaching staff share key information regarding progress and attainment at in year Parents' Meetings and well as in greater detail in the Record of Achievement. Characteristics of Effective Learning are reported in detail in the Record of Achievement.

Baseline Assessment

Wellgate Primary School selected the Early Excellence Baseline as the provider from September 2015. The age appropriate baseline will be completed for F2 children during the first half term and staff use the reports that this information generates to inform future planning.

In Nursery baseline assessments are completed within the first three weeks of the child's time at Wellgate using the Early Excellence Assessment statements as guidance. This information is then used to identify the next steps in development for each child.

Equal Opportunities, Inclusion & Special Educational Needs

(For further details see the relevant whole school policies)

The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in accordance with the present, relevant policies for Wellgate Primary School. Children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability. We support the belief that everyone is unique in their own right and act upon it.

- The buildings are all accessible to children with physical disabilities.
- Our curriculum respects the ethnicity, faith and cultural heritage of each child. We ensure that our provision, visitors and activities reflect the varied world we live in.
- It is the responsibility of the school that we identify and support the children in our care with additional educational needs, including engaging the support of EAL teachers where appropriate.