



St James & Emmanuel  
Academy Trust

# EYFS Policy

September 2021

West Didsbury CE  
Primary School



## Our Mission Statement

“To grow a diverse and creative educational community, where we encourage **belonging** and nurture **believing**; together **becoming** fulfilled and responsible members of God’s world.”

(Rooted in Mark 4 30-32)

This document describes the school's approach to teaching and learning in the Early Years. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our **Outdoor Play Policy**, **Personal Care Policy** and **Online Learning Journey Policy**.

### **The Four Overarching Principles of the EYFS**

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates.

*Statutory Framework for the Early Years 2021*

At West Didsbury CE, we ensure a quality learning experience and secure foundation for all children in the following ways.

## **1. The Best for Every Child**

Every child deserves the opportunity to access a rich learning experience that allows them to build a secure foundation for future learning and fulfil their potential, regardless of their background. The early years are a crucial time for children's learning and development. Therefore, we strive to provide all children with a high-quality early years experience, and in doing so, help to narrow the attainment gap for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and adapt learning so that it is accessible to all. We aim to achieve this in the following ways:

- All practitioners have a good knowledge of the impact of disadvantage on children's outcomes and how the Covid-19 pandemic has had an even greater impact on this group of children.
- Children are assessed within the first few weeks of school and gaps in their knowledge are identified and addressed through planning, targeted teaching and interventions.
- All practitioners are aware of the importance of communication and language in a child's development. Teachers plan for a language rich environment where there are structured opportunities for children to have meaningful conversations and use newly introduced vocabulary.
- Children are screened using the Wellcomm assessment and children who need support in communication and language are identified quickly. Staff are trained in completing interventions and help children to practise newly learnt skills in the learning environment.
- For children who have English as an additional language, opportunities are given for them to use their home language in their play. Where children have little or no English, staff endeavour to learn key words in their home language and provide a range of visual cues to allow children to communicate their wants and needs. Our

EAL lead advises practitioners on how to support children who have English as an additional language within our learning environment.

- Key vocabulary word/picture mats are sent home half-termly for children who have English as an additional language and for those who are working at an earlier stage of development than expected in communication and language.
- SEND needs are identified quickly by teachers and concerns are discussed with the school SENDCo. Teachers meet with parents to discuss concerns and find out more about a child's needs. Practitioners value the parent's knowledge of their child and make time to listen. Parents are involved at all stages of the referral process.
- We request involvement and advice from outside agencies when required, for example, speech and language, the school nurse, bilingual support and social workers.
- Parents are provided with information to enable them to access support from outside agencies if necessary.

### 1.1 Safeguarding Children (Also see Safeguarding Policy)

- All EYFS staff are trained in safeguarding procedures and report to the child safeguarding officers.
- Children are encouraged to share their worries and practitioners make time to listen to children.
- At least one member of Early Years staff is trained in paediatric first aid.
- Accidents are reported in the accident book and parents are contacted when appropriate.

## **2. High-quality Care**

It is our priority to ensure that every child has a positive experience of school and learning in their first year at West Didsbury CE Primary. We want children to feel confident in expressing their wants and needs, exploring new activities and experiences, taking risks in their learning and developing their resilience. This is not possible unless children feel safe, secure and valued within their classroom environment, as well as within their relationships with their peers and practitioners.

### 2.1 Secure relationships with practitioners

- The child's experience is at the heart of everything we do.
- Children are greeted with a smile as they arrive and time is taken to chat to them by the teacher and/or teaching assistant every morning.
- All staff take time to get to know children well, and can therefore quickly identify any changes in behaviour and know how best to comfort children when they are upset.
- Children are always given time to talk and express their wants, needs and feelings.
- Staff are patient when children are finding it hard to communicate or express their feelings and practitioners carry visuals which children are invited to use.
- Practitioners enjoy playing and learning alongside the children and understand how vital their enthusiasm is in engaging children and helping them to develop a real love of learning.

### 2.2 An inclusive environment

- We provide a rich and varied curriculum and learning environment which reflects the different cultures and faiths of our children and wider community.
- Children are taught about a wide range of faiths and cultures within RE and PSSED sessions.

- They are encouraged to share their own experiences of family, culture, community and special religious events.
- Children have the opportunity to experience different cultures through meaningful experiences, for example, food tasting, celebrating religious and cultural festivals through 'experience days' and language days.
- Members of our community are invited into school to talk to the children about special religious and cultural events.
- Clothing and objects from a range of cultures are available for children to explore within the learning environment. Children are taught about objects before they are introduced into the learning environment and we discuss why it is important that we respect them.
- Children have access to high-quality texts that reflect a range of ethnicities, cultures, faiths, family structures and languages.
- We aim to provide children with a sense of community within our classroom, our school and beyond. Our ethos of belonging, believing and becoming is embedded into every aspect of our practice and we endeavour to make every child feel valued and respected within our school community.

### 2.3 Transitions into Reception

- Practitioners understand that transitions from a nursery setting into Reception can be daunting for children and endeavour to make this transition a smooth and exciting journey.
- Teachers have strong links with local nursery settings. Where possible, regular visits are arranged for nursery children to visit West Didsbury and for teachers to visit local nurseries to meet children and read stories throughout the year.
- In Summer term, teachers visit all children in their nursery setting. These visits provide an opportunity to discuss each child's individual needs, likes, dislikes and overall progress with the child's key worker. Teachers are also able to meet and chat with each child and observe children in the setting.
- Children are invited for two 'stay and play' sessions with parents where they can explore the learning environment and meet their classmates.
- We implement a staggered start for up to 6 days in September. Children attend for half a day in order to get to know their teachers, peers and setting in a quieter environment. Children are split into a morning group and afternoon group to ensure that the classroom is as calm as possible.
- During the first weeks, teachers and parents communicate regularly about how their child is settling in. The staggered start period may be extended for some children if deemed necessary by parents and teachers.

### 2.4 Transitions into Year 1

- In order to ensure a smooth transition from Reception to Year 1, both class teams work closely together.
- Throughout the Summer term, children discuss the transition to Year 1 within their PSED sessions. Children are encouraged to share any worries and ask questions.
- Children visit Year 1 for transition sessions where they explore their new classroom and meet their new teachers.
- Throughout the Summer term, the number of weekly group work sessions and group sizes are increased in preparation for Year 1.
- Staff from Reception and Year 1 invite parents to a transition workshop to discuss the transition, changes as the children move towards the National Curriculum and give parents an opportunity to ask questions.

- Parents are advised on learning they can complete with their child over the Summer holiday to prepare children for Year 1.
- Children with additional needs and those who find transitions particularly challenging are given a transition book to read over the Summer holiday which contains photographs of their new teachers and classroom.
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss each child's needs and progress in detail to ensure that children can continue with their individual targets as soon as they enter Year 1.
- Throughout the Autumn Term in Year 1, teachers plan for children to have more independent learning time in the classroom provision.
- Year 1 and Reception teachers work closely throughout the year to discuss individual children's needs and progress.

### **3. The Curriculum**

Our curriculum is based on Development Matters and has been carefully planned to ensure a progression of key skills throughout the year and opportunities to return to previous learning and build upon it. This ensures that children leave Reception with a depth of knowledge and a secure understanding. A large focus is placed on Communication and Language as this forms the foundation for all other learning. There are planned opportunities within whole class teaching, group work and through continuous provision for children to learn new vocabulary and practise applying it. Our curriculum also provides children with a breadth of new experiences through regular enrichments such as baking days, religious celebrations and trips. It aims to enable children to become confident and independent learners who act as a force for good in society. Learning is carefully planned as part of a spiral curriculum that builds from Reception through to Year 6.

As outlined in Development Matters, learning is split into prime and specific areas.

#### **3.1 Prime Areas of Learning**

The three prime areas of learning are particularly crucial in creating a foundation for learning and allowing children to effectively communicate, form relationships with others, grow in independence and look after their holistic health. These include:

- Communication and Language
  - Listening, attention and understanding
  - Speaking
- Physical Development
  - Fine Motor
  - Gross Motor
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
  - Self-Regulation
  - Managing Self
  - Building Relationships

#### **3.2 Specific Areas of Learning**

The specific areas of learning provide children with essential knowledge and skills and build upon learning in the prime areas. These include:

- Literacy
  - Comprehension
  - Word Reading
  - Writing
- Mathematics

- Number
- Numerical Pattern
- Understanding the World
  - Past and Present
  - People, Culture and Communities
  - The Natural World
- Expressive Arts and Design
  - Creating with Materials
  - Being Imaginative and Expressive

## **4. Pedagogy**

At West Didsbury CE, we believe that children learn best when they have a wealth of opportunities to learn in a range of different ways. Play is key and is at the core of all learning in the Early Years. We believe that children should be given time to explore their own interests independently, but that it is equally important for them to be introduced to new learning and concepts through high-quality teaching from experienced adults. In our Reception classrooms, children learn through a blend of adult-led teaching, guided group work activities and independent/supported learning within our learning environment. Our environment is viewed by all as the children's third educator. Here, children are provided with a rich array of open-ended resources which they can use to further explore what they have learnt in lessons and explore new learning of their own. During children's independent learning, staff observe and know when to become involved in scaffolding learning and when to stand back. Mistakes are welcomed and embraced, and children understand that this is an important part of their learning. In order to equip children to become effective learners now, throughout their schooling and throughout their future, children must become independent in making choices, innovating, taking responsibility for their learning, facing challenges and thinking flexibly and critically. The characteristics of effective teaching and learning are therefore integral and are weaved throughout all aspects of our pedagogy. These include;

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Our aim is for children to leave Reception with resilience, independence and, most importantly, a passion for learning.

### **4.1 The Indoor and Outdoor Learning Environment (Also see Outdoor Learning Policy)**

- Children have access to a high-quality indoor and outdoor environment throughout the school day.
- Through use of muted displays, clearly labelled resources, minimal clutter and careful use of colour, the environment is designed to be a calm and conducive to focused learning.
- Resources are carefully selected to be open ended and allow children to consolidate learning as well as explore new ideas in a practical way.
- There is challenge at all levels within the learning areas and resources are differentiated.

- Each area contains a challenge indicated on a challenge card, but resources are kept open ended to encourage children to use resources in a range of ways and return to tasks again and again.
- The outdoor environment provides children with a different learning experience to indoors. However, the same level of challenge is evident.
- Children are invited to explore learning in an active, hands-on way.
- There are a wealth of opportunities for children to explore nature, weather, seasons and make observations about the world around them.
- Children have the opportunity to take considered risks within our safe outdoor space.
- Children have the opportunity to explore learning outdoors in all weathers.
- Children are often directed to learn in a specific area at the beginning of the session to consolidate skills that they need to work on.
- Children build up throughout the year to completing three learning challenges per week.
- There are planned opportunities throughout all areas of the learning environment for children to develop their communication and language skills and practise recently introduced vocabulary.
- Children's resilience and independence is encouraged using our 'Three Before Me' strategy where children must use their 'brain, boards and buddy' to help them in their learning before asking an adult.
- Verbal feedback is given on children's independent work and significant moments in children's learning are celebrated with the whole class.
- Sessions within learning areas are kept as long as possible to allow children to become immersed in their learning.

#### 4.2 Guided Learning and Direct Teaching

- Direct teaching in Reception is engaging and meaningful and aims to hook children into their learning.
- Children have daily whole class input in literacy, maths and phonics.
- Children have a weekly whole class input in PSED, Communication and Language, PE, Understanding the World, Spanish and RE.
- Children also have a daily story/poetry shared read.
- Children have four guided sessions per week which take place in a small group of up to 6 children. These include a guided read, a guided write, maths session and art task. These increase towards the end of the Summer Term in order to prepare children for Year 1.
- In literacy, we follow a Talk for Writing cycle, with an emphasis on oral rehearsal of stories and learning new vocabulary. High quality texts are chosen for children to learn and innovate. Texts are introduced through exciting hooks, e.g. baking gingerbread and having a surprise visit from a fairy!
- In maths, teaching is based on the White Rose scheme. Lessons are practical, meaningful to children and aim to provide children with a deep understanding of number and numerical pattern.
- The curriculum is planned carefully so that children can return to prior learning and build upon it.

## **5. Assessment**

Assessment is an important part of the learning cycle as it allows practitioners to identify children's current knowledge and evaluate their next steps. Assessment in Reception is undertaken both formally and informally, but the majority of our assessments are informal and take place every day in the classroom. Practitioners spend time observing children and

scaffolding their learning, both within the continuous provision and through adult-led activities and whole class teaching. Practitioners are continually evaluating children's learning and using their in-depth knowledge of each child to plan whole class teaching, group work sessions and activities within our continuous provision. If necessary, targeted interventions are put in place which build on children's prior learning and help them to achieve their next steps.

### 5.1 Baseline Assessments

- The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is completed within the first six weeks of a child starting school.
- Alongside the RBA, our own baseline assessment is also completed for each child in order to gain a deeper understanding of their attainment and identify any gaps in children's learning that have not already been covered in the RBA.
- This is completed through observation of the children's independent learning, teacher judgement and through completing 1-1 tasks with the children.
- No formal assessments are completed within the first week, in order to allow time for staff to get to know children and help them to settle.
- Parents are made aware that the RBA is being completed and understand that they can request the report from this if they wish.
- Following the completion of the baseline assessment, parents are informed of any concerns identified.
- Information from the baseline assessment is used to inform planning and identify children to take part in interventions.

### 5.2 Wellcomm Assessment

- During the Autumn Term, the Wellcomm screening tool is used to assess children's development in their communication and language.
- Information gathered from this assessment is used to identify children's next steps and targeted interventions with a teacher or teaching assistant are planned.
- Parents are informed if a child's communication and language is assessed as being at a lower age band than expected. Activities and resources are provided for parents to use with their child at home.
- For children identified as working at a lower age band than expected, targeted interventions continue throughout the year until a child is working at the expected level.

### 5.3 Target Tracker

- Target Tracker is used throughout Early Years and the rest of the school to track children's progress.
- Target Tracker data is discussed at three key points in the year during data meetings with the Senior Leadership Team.

### 5.4 Observations

- All children in our Reception classes have a personal online learning journey which is used to record significant learning moments throughout their time in Reception.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and support staff know the children well and recognise significant moments in their learning and development. They understand when to become involved in a child's learning and when to stand back and allow them to explore independently.
- Observations of significant moments in the children's learning are taken using the Target Tracker app.
- All staff contribute towards children's learning journeys.



- Observations may consist of photographs, video recordings and/or written descriptions.
- Only significant moments in children's learning will be recorded if/when appropriate and recorded observations will be kept to a minimum in order to allow practitioners to spend the maximum amount of time interacting with children and scaffolding their learning.
- Parents are able to view children's observations through Target Tracker Link.
- Parents are not currently able to upload their own observations to Target Tracker Link, but are encouraged to contribute towards their child's learning journey by uploading observations of significant moments in their child's learning to the online learning platform, Seesaw.

#### 5.5 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, or EYFSP, is completed in the Summer term, no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June.
- The outcomes of this assessment are informed by practitioners' knowledge and professional judgement of the child.
- We assess children as being expected or emerging against each of the 17 Early Learning Goals.
- This data is submitted to the local authority.
- A copy of the EYFSP is given to parents and there is a planned opportunity to discuss this in the Summer Term.
- A copy is also given to Year 1 teachers and practitioners discuss children's progress in detail in order to support each child's transition to Year 1.

## **6. Self-regulation and Executive Function**

Self-regulation is a key skill in enabling children to become effective learners. Children who have good executive function skills are able to retain information presented to them, remain focused on tasks, adapt their learning when necessary and can manage their feelings and impulses. These are key life skills which prepare children for the wider world. Good communication and language skills are essential in enabling children to develop good executive function skills. We aim to weave these skills throughout every aspect of children's school life and facilitate their development through our PSED lessons, our positive behaviour policy and, most importantly, through supporting the development of children's language.

### 6.1 Social and Emotional Development

Our weekly PSED lessons aim to enable children to;

- Follow the school rules and recognise why they are important in keeping everyone safe and allowing everyone to learn to the best of their ability.
- Form positive relationships with their peers and adults.
- Recognise that everyone is different, everyone is special and everyone has something to contribute.
- Describe a range of emotions, recognise the emotions they are feeling and identify positive strategies for managing these.
- Consider how others are feeling and identify ways that we can help others.
- Believe in themselves and become resilient learners.
- Recognise that we learn through making mistakes.
- Prepare for the transition from Reception to Year 1.

Our PSED lessons link closely to our behaviour policy, our pedagogy and our school ethos of belonging, believing, becoming.

In addition to our PSED lessons;

- Children are given the opportunity to consolidate what they know about friendships, differences, emotions and rules throughout every aspect of their school life and are supported with this by all members of staff.
- Positive relationships are modelled consistently by staff.
- Children discuss a range of topics and important current issues during our 'Big Question' sessions.
- We have a classroom reflection area where children are given the opportunity to complete tasks relating to current learning in PSED and RE or can use this area to take time to relax and manage their feelings.

## 6.2 Managing Self

It is becoming increasingly important for children to learn how to manage their own physical and mental wellbeing in order to prepare children for the often fast paced, busy, digital world that they live in. Therefore, children are taught about how to stay healthy through managing their sleep, exercise, oral health, personal hygiene, screen time and through eating a wide variety of healthy foods.

- Children are provided with a choice of healthy snacks at lunch and snack time and our salad bar ensures that children are able to make their own choices regarding healthy eating.
- We organise visits from health professionals such as doctors, nurses and dentists to talk to the children about looking after themselves.
- Children are encouraged to take part in physical activities in our outdoor area on a daily basis.
- Children have weekly PE lessons and discuss how the changes in their bodies when they are active.

Children also have hearing, eyesight and weight check-ups in school with consent from parents.

## 6.3 Behaviour Policy

- We have adopted a positive approach to behaviour management where children are praised for the good choices they make.
- Children are provided with a set of 'Golden Rules' which are displayed in the classroom and referred to regularly. These rules are 'kind hands, kind feet and kind words'.
- Children's good behaviour is rewarded with verbal praise, stickers, house points and SMILERS.
- Teachers set a weekly challenge for children, for example good listening on the carpet or challenging themselves in their learning. When children achieve this, their name is placed on the 'Busy Bees Board'. When all children have their name on the board, a class treat is organised. This motivates children to work as a team and support their peers.
- Every week, a child is selected to receive a Gold Award for good work, which is awarded in our celebration assembly, and their achievements are recorded in our Gold Book.

- Where a child's behaviour is not appropriate, children are provided with two choices about how they move forward with their behaviour.
- Children are encouraged to make the right choices and taught to understand why their behaviour was not acceptable and how they can rectify this and learn from their mistakes.

## **7. Partnership with Parents**

Parents know their children best and are a child's first and most important educator. Therefore, partnership with parents is at the heart of what we do. We recognise that the contributions parents make to their children's education are invaluable and can make a huge, lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

### **7.1 Communication**

- Before children start school, parents are invited to attend a presentation evening in order to find out important information, learn more about the Reception curriculum and ask any questions.
- Parents are greeted by the class teacher or teaching assistant at the beginning and end of the day to pass on any important messages. Parents are invited to arrange a meeting if they would like to discuss anything in more detail.
- Parents are given teachers' email addresses and are encouraged to contact the teachers if they have questions or concerns.
- Parents are informed about children's learning for the following week on the Seesaw online learning platform.
- Parents are informed of the statutory baseline assessment (RBA) and are made aware that they can request the report from this if they wish.
- There are planned opportunities for parents to look at their child's books termly. Parents can request to see these more regularly if they wish.
- Children's learning journeys are available for parents to view online through Target Tracker Link and observations of significant moments in children's learning are uploaded regularly.
- Parents evenings are held in the Autumn Term and Spring term. Parents are invited to further discuss their child's progress at another time if there is insufficient time during parents evening.
- Parents are given a formal written report on their child's progress in Reception towards the end of the year.
- Parents are invited to complete questionnaires throughout the year to obtain their views and opinions surrounding various topics.

### **7.2 Parents as Educators**

- Parental workshops led by members of staff are held regularly throughout the year and cover topics such as early reading and transitions to Year 1.
- Where possible, workshops take place on two dates in order to facilitate parent's attendance.
- Parents are informed of the importance of reading with their child at home and are taught how best to help with their child's reading during parent workshops.
- They are provided with a weekly library book and decodable home reading book in order to facilitate high quality home reading.
- Parents are given a home reading record and are encouraged to comment on the children's progress in reading at home. They are invited to ask for advice with home reading if necessary.

- Pre-learning tasks based on learning for the following week are uploaded to Seesaw every Friday for children to complete with their parents at home.
- Pre-learning tasks are accompanied by a detailed explanation for parents to follow and relevant resources if necessary.
- Informative feedback is given to the children and support is offered to parents if needed.
- Parents are encouraged to upload observations of significant moments in child's learning to Seesaw.

### 7.3 Parental Involvement Within School

- Parent Café is held weekly and is an opportunity for parents to meet one another socially.
- Parents are invited to be 'Mystery Readers'. They surprise children by coming into school to read their child's favourite story to the class. This takes place weekly.
- Parents are invited to come into school to teach children about their area of expertise, for example, dentists, doctors, or teaching children about religious festivals.

**Approved** by local Governing Board:

February 2022

**To be reviewed:**

February 2025