



# Welcome to Early Years Foundation Stage

## Learning begins at home

The expectations for children starting school for the first time does not vary much from school to school. You, as parents, will probably have taught your children some, if not most, of the skills listed below:

- Go to the toilet by themselves and be able to wash and dry their hands properly.
- Fasten and unfasten their clothes and shoes, and get dressed and undressed independently.
- Write their own first name using a capital letter at the beginning of their name and the rest lower case.
- Begin to count from one to twenty.
- Begin to know the sounds of the letters of the alphabet as shown on this helpful website: <https://www.phonicbooks.co.uk/advice-and-resources/videos/>
- Sing or recite a few nursery rhymes aloud.
- Recognise and know basic colours and shapes.
- Listen carefully to stories showing an awareness of the difference between pictures and text and the directionality of print.
- Know and use basic manners such as please and thank you.
- Take turns and share fairly with their peers.

We are sure you will agree that these expectations are minimal and simply part of normal family life. These basic life skills will form the basis of your child's education and will be further developed during their time in school.

We look forward to welcoming your child to Whitehills Primary School and firmly believe that a true partnership between parents and school will enable your child to achieve his/her potential.

We want your child to be happy and enjoy their time with us. In order to achieve this we need to work co-operatively together with the same goals in mind.

Should you require any more information, we will be only too happy to help.

### The Early Years Foundation Stage Teachers



Mrs Amos



Miss Neary

# Our Aims

At Whitehills Primary School we aim to:

1. Offer a safe, happy and secure environment which fosters children's social, emotional, moral, intellectual and spiritual development.
2. Provide broad, balanced learning experiences.
3. Offer learning experiences in a lively, practical, multi-sensory way in order to enable children to develop the mental building blocks necessary to cope with the more focused, formal study requirements in Key Stage 1.
4. Develop partnerships between children, staff and parents.
5. Create an environment that:
  - ◆ Supports children as autonomous and independent learners
  - ◆ Fosters children's natural curiosity
  - ◆ Develop language and build on vocabulary
  - ◆ Encourages children to develop as critical thinkers

# Our Team

There are 2 classes in Foundation Stage 2 (FS2) between 2 teachers and learning support assistants.

Both classes will have a maximum of 30 children.

School times once the children are full time are as follows:

Morning—8.55am to 12.00pm.

Afternoon—1.00pm to 3.10pm.

(Lunch break—12.00pm to 1.00pm)

While the children are settling into school life their playtimes will be separate from the rest of the school.

# Organisation

Although your child has been assigned to a class base for registration, most of the time the children will be 'free flowing' around all the FS2 areas, including outside. The teachers will be team teaching, supported by our experienced learning support assistants.

All work is planned by the class teachers but some activities may be supervised by a learning support assistant or another adult.

Much of the learning will be through play in various forms whether it be creative, imaginative, constructive or physical.

These activities are carefully planned and monitored by all staff in order to ensure that the children acquire a variety of skills necessary for their future development.

# The Curriculum

We follow the new Early Years Foundation Stage framework. This has three prime areas of learning

1. Communication and Language
2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
3. Physical Development

These fundamental areas of learning are the building blocks/development stages that allow the children to learn in the following specific areas

- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

## The Prime Areas

### 1. Communication and Language

Communication and Language has two aspects:

1. Listening and attention
2. Speaking

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back and forth interactions form 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. Our staff read frequently to children and engage them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then provide them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, which will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from the teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, our children will be comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

### 2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Personal, social and emotional development has three aspects:

1. Self-regulation
2. Managing self
3. Building relationships

We strongly believe that children's personal, social and emotional development is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. We aim to provide strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults that enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Your child will be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self and set themselves goals in order to develop confidence in their own abilities. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating. Through supported interaction with other children we aim to teach them how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peacefully.

If your child is worried about anything, especially if it is a problem with another child, then, please tell us about it as we can usually resolve the situation without too many difficulties.

## 3. Physical Development

Physical development is split into two aspects:

1. Gross motor
2. Fine motor

Physical activity is vital to 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 development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness. We aim to develop your child's core strength, stability, balance, spacial 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 literacy.

Physical development within the Foundation Stage not only includes the teaching of P.E. skills such as gymnastics, games and dance, but also focuses on the development of gross and fine motor skills. Your child will have the opportunity to develop their physical skills, both inside and outside, on a daily basis.

You will be notified when P.E. will commence and your child will need to come to school dressed in their named P.E. kit. (White T-shirt, navy/black bottoms)

All earrings must be removed for all physical activities. (New piercings may be taped.) If they are not, then children will not be able to take part in the lesson. This is in line with county and school guidelines.

**Through the teaching and learning of these prime areas, the children will gain essential skills and knowledge through the specific areas mentioned below.**

## Literacy

There are two aspects to Literacy:

1. Reading
2. Writing

### Reading

Reading is an essential skill to develop and your child will begin to learn letter sounds and words within a few weeks of starting school. Reading consists of two dimensions: language and comprehension and word reading.

Language comprehension is developed by adults talking to children about the world around them and about the books they read.

There are two parts to word reading; these are phonetic skills in order to decode and using sight recognition to learn tricky words. Phonics forms an essential part of learning to read and write. As an early part of each child's literacy development, it is important to ensure that children hear and recognise sounds, both within their environment and within words. In order to ensure that the children develop these skills, they will receive regular phonics lessons which are differentiated to meet the needs of each child.

We match our 'I READ' books to the phonics your child has learnt so they can practise taught skills at home. 'WE READ' books are also given to share at home and to develop language comprehension.

### Writing

We aim to provide children with a variety of stimulating writing activities to encourage them to 'have a go' with their own 'emergent writing'.

During the year, we focus on correct pencil hold and letter formation. As children learn letter sounds and phonics, they become more confident at using these in their writing. The children will have regular opportunities to draw and write simple sentences as the year progresses.

# Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that children can develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. We aim to teach your child how to count confidently and develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationship between them and the patterns between those numbers. We will also teach children number bonds for numbers 0-10. Children will also develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics, including shape, space and measures. They will learn vocabulary related to length, weight and capacity.

Effective early mathematics experiences involve seeking patterns, creating and solving mathematical problems and engaging with stories, songs, games and practical activities.

Areas that will be covered during the year are:

- **Comparison**—comparing groups
- **Counting**—touching each object as they count 1:1
- **Cardinality**—(subitising) recognising how many objects without counting up to five and maybe beyond
- **Composition**—beginning to solve practical mathematical problems within play
  - recognising each counting number is one more than the one before
- **Shape**—children will use a variety of shapes when building and creating . They will partition and combine shapes to make other shapes.
- **Pattern**—explore and create simple patterns using actions and objects, predicting what comes next
- **Measures**—in meaningful context, find longer or shorter, heavier or lighter, and full or empty and more/less

# Understanding the World

This area of the curriculum has three aspects:

1. Past and present
2. People, culture and communities
3. The natural world

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. Children’s personal experiences increase their knowledge and sense of the world around them. We aim to provide children with opportunities to find out:

- People who help us
- Explore artefacts, accounts, pictures and stories from the past
- Their local environment
- Nature and seasons
- Religious festivals and a variety of cultures
- Compare their life with the life of a child in another country

# Expressive Arts and Design

Expressive arts and design has two aspects:

1. Creating with materials
2. Being imaginative and expressive

Children will 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. Creative development contains art, music and roleplay/drama activities. Children will be encouraged to use their imagination, use a variety of mediums and techniques and explore ways of making different sounds.

## Baseline Assessment

The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment is an activity-based assessment of children's starting point in language, communication, literacy and mathematics.

It will take place within the first weeks of children starting school and take roughly 20 minutes. It will be carried out one-to-one with pupils and does not have a pass mark. Children will be assessed orally through simple, practical tasks which could include counting or describing pictures, reflecting the types of activities which many parents already do with their children at home.

## Evidence Me

Evidence Me is the app we use in school to record many of your child's learning achievements. This app enables us to send copies of these observations directly to parents via email.

It also enables parents to send videos and photos to school of learning that takes place at home. We see the learning journey as a partnership and would encourage all parents to send evidence of their child's achievements as these will form part of each child's individual learning journey.

Details of setting this up will be sent separately.

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## School Partnerships

We hope that this gives you an idea of how we work in Foundation Stage 2, but if there is anything you are not clear about or that is worrying you, then please come into school and discuss it with the people concerned or make an appointment to see us.

We would rather you ask us than discuss your problem at the school gate, which will probably make your worries greater. We cannot do anything to help you if you do not tell us your concerns.

We are looking forward to working with both you and your child, and to building a partnership with you which will give the children the confidence they need to feel secure in this new environment.

*Once again, welcome to  
Whitehills Primary School,  
we hope this will be the start  
of a long and happy relationship.*

