



WyreForestSchool

Communication Specialist

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Date of next review:	2025	Written by:	Charley Curtis
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Signature:			

“Our Vision is to truly ensure that we meet the individual needs of all children at WFS and prepare them for adulthood. At Our School **We Foster Success** by providing a safe, happy environment in which all pupils can develop and achieve”

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that all pupils in our early years;

- Have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, which is tailored to their individual needs, in order to develop the skills and knowledge needed to progress through school and life
- Receive high quality teaching and learning from skilled and experienced professionals who have a passion for igniting children’s interests and supporting pupils to reach their full potential
- Feel safe, secure and included, through adherence to the Early Years Statutory Framework, Keeping Children Safe in Education and ensuring equality of opportunity

It is our intention that by the end of their reception year, pupils at WFS will have;

- Established a preferred mode of communication e.g; Picture Exchange Communication (PECs), Signing, Speaking, Aided Language Displays, Photographs/Objects of Reference.
- Built positive relationships with staff which enable them to feel secure and supported in school
- Developed their curiosity so that pupils are motivated to engage in the variety of learning experiences that we offer here at WFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage and Wyre Forest School

At our school, we adhere to the statutory framework outlined by the EYFS alongside our own tailored curriculum which is designed to meet the unique and individual needs of the pupils who attend. The Early Learning Goals set out in the Development Matters, are embedded within our WFS Progression Steps.

The EYFS is based upon 4 important principles;

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning and Development.

These principles underpin our practice, and go hand-in-hand with our school ethos of providing a responsive curriculum that meets the ever-changing needs of our pupils.

The table below demonstrates how our WFS Progression Steps align with the EYFS Areas of Development, ensuring that we cover all areas of learning and development, whilst also breaking down the milestones into smaller, more achievable steps for our complex learners. At WFS, we initially focus on the Prime Areas of development of our learners, due to the complex nature of their needs, however we also ensure a broad and balanced curriculum which includes the specific areas, when the pupils are ready.

EYFS	Wyre Forest School Progression Steps
Prime Areas	
Communication and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening, Attention and Understanding - Speaking 	Communication and Interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encounter - Awareness - Attention - Response - Engagement - Participation - Involvement - Speaking - Listening Play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solitary - Exploratory - Functional - Relational - Parallel - Shared - Structured - Imaginative
Personal, Social and Emotional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-regulation - Managing self - Building Relationships 	Mental Health and Well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feelings and emotions - Relationships - Sense of self Independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel Training (Transitioning) - Life Skills
Physical Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gross motor skills - Fine Motor Skills 	Physical Well-being and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercise and rest - Body awareness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fine Motor Development - Gross Motor Development Independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal Care - Eating and Drinking
Specific Areas	
Understanding the World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Past and present - People, culture and communities - The natural world 	The World About Us <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The world about me - People and communities - Technology and Computing Outdoor Learning
Expressive Arts and Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating with materials - Being imaginative and expressive 	Creative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Art - Dance - Music
Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehension - Word Reading - Writing 	Cognition and Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem scenarios - Literacy - Maths
Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number - Numerical Patterns 	

At WFS, we recognise the importance of engagement, play, and exploration in children's learning and development, and we believe that communication is the overarching area of development on which pupil progression and success depends upon. We value and recognise the Characteristics of Effective learning, and plan opportunities to promote these in our daily offer.

<p>Characteristics of Effective Learning</p> <p>Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’</p> <p>Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements</p> <p>Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.</p>

A Unique Child

At WFS, we recognise and celebrate that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. In specialist provision, this is even more prevalent and for many of our learners, progress is slow and lateral. Pupils present with mixed abilities, for example, a child with complex communication needs may demonstrate higher level skills in literacy, and a pupil with a physical disability may demonstrate higher level communication skills. Within the Early Years, we set realistic yet challenging expectations to meet these needs based on comprehensive assessment of needs, barriers and learning styles.

Many of the pupils present with a range of sensory needs, in addition to the barriers across all areas of their development, which impacts upon their engagement and progress. In the Early Years, we are committed to identifying and addressing individual needs at the earliest point, in order to enable us to tailor our provision to meet these needs and overcome barriers to learning.

We meet the unique needs of our pupils through;

- Identifying and responding appropriately to communication needs, supporting pupils to discover their voice, and adopting a total communication approach
- Planning motivating and engaging opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing a curriculum which takes account of, and responds to, the children's developmental needs and allows them to make progress related to their differing abilities. "What the child can do" will always be our starting point.
- Providing a safe, supportive and motivating learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity, embrace equal opportunities and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Monitoring children's progress regularly and providing support as necessary. We ensure that the children have positive experiences of success at their own level in order to give them confidence and motivation for lifelong learning.
- Creating a partnership with parent/carers in order to support and enhance the development of each child.

- Promoting and recognising the value of independence across all areas of learning, in order prepare our pupils to lead the most independent lifestyles as possible in adulthood
- Working in partnership with professionals across Education, Health and Social care in order to meet need, including making referrals and signposting to relevant services

Safeguarding

It is vital that all children in our school are 'safe'. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

In Early Years, we recognise our role in developing positive relationships with pupils, families and professionals, and ensuring consistency of approaches to achieve the best outcomes for our learners. Many of the pupils at WFS rely on adults around them to interpret their needs, therefore it is fundamental that we tune into the unique presentation of our pupils, to enable them to feel heard, safe and supported so that they can make their needs known.

Staff are committed to building trusting and positive relationships with pupils, through play, intensive interaction, following pupils line of interests and being invested in their progress.

Parent/Carer Partnerships

We understand that parent/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parent/carers have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- Talking to parent/carers in detail about their child before they start attending our school, gaining their views and an understanding of the child's needs and interests.

- Inviting all parent/carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and providing on-going opportunities for parent/carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Providing parent/carers the opportunity to attend stay-and-play events in class to develop relationships with parent/carers and involve them in their child's journey.
- There is an initial review meeting of the child's Education, Health and Care Plan during their first year at school at which the teacher and the parent/carer discuss the child's progress. Parent/carers also receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the summer term.
- Parent/carer consultation meetings take place at least twice a year. At these or at any time across the year, parent/carers are given the opportunity to express their wishes regarding pupil's targets so that we can work towards a personal goal which would make a difference to their daily life at home such as; supporting pupils with toothbrushing
- Parent/carers receive regular information regarding their child and can contact staff at any time. They are also encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey through sharing 'Wow!' moments from home, and their thoughts about areas of progress

Key Workers

In line with statutory guidance, all pupils in Early Years are assigned a Key Worker within their class team. The responsibility of the key worker is to build positive relationships with the pupils, taking note of their interests and skills, and ensuring a smooth and settled start to school life.

Whilst teachers are the main point of contact for pupils in Early Years, Key Workers are introduced to parent/carers and families at any events in school the year, so that they can contribute to discussions and further develop positive working relationships.

Multi-agency approach

In Early Years at WFS we work closely with a variety of professionals, alongside parent/carers and families in order to meet pupil need. We value and respect the professional advice of other services, and take this on board to improve outcomes for children.

We work collaboratively with other professional by;

- Setting and agreeing priority targets to meet pupil needs, and to feed into their EHCP
- Communicating progress and seeking advice where appropriate
- Attending in-house training led by other services/subject specialists, tailored to the current cohort of pupils
- Holding professional discussions and multi-agency meetings for pupils with complex needs who are involved with multiple services

External agencies with whom we collaborate with regularly include but are not limited to; speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, community paediatric services, and social care. WFS recognises the importance of the Team Around the Child and adopts a holistic approach to meeting need.

Enabling Environments

At WFS we acknowledge that the learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. Through observation we assess the children's understanding, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. Although we adhere to EYFS environmental principles the needs of specific learner groups may require us to adapt classroom and outside learning areas.

We ensure that staff are continually reflective of the ever-changing needs of our learners, and responding to those needs by adapting their learning environment so that it is fit for purpose. We pride ourselves in being a 'communication specialist' school, and adopt a total communication approach. In practice, this means that classes ensure that communication needs are being met at all levels. We have objects, photographs and symbols of reference displayed for pupils to access, as well as access to PECs, Aided Language Displays (ALDs), Audio Cues, and a variety of augmentative and alternative communication (ACC) systems.

Environments in early years reflect the needs of individual learners who use those spaces, including meeting sensory processing needs. This may include using specialist equipment such as physical and sensory circuit items, or specially adapted furniture. Pupils also have access to the specialist resources required to meet their sensory needs and enable them to feel calm and regulated such as; ear defenders, and chew toys. This in turn, enables pupils to use resources more functionally, and maximises learning opportunities.

The Early Years classes are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or be quiet and rest. Children can access enclosed outdoor areas offering further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

Learning and Development

At WFS, we deliver our Early Years curriculum largely through play and exploration. We value the impact of child-led learning and recognise that pupils learn best when they are motivated. In Reception, days are planned around one focused area of learning where pupils have an individually tailored adult-led focused activity to complete, alongside continuous provision which is designed to engage and motivate pupils to self-engage across a variety of areas.

Every moment is a learning moment. In the Early Years, we take the opportunity to extend pupil knowledge and skills across all parts of the school day. Communication is heavily supported across all activities, especially around mealtimes and personal care routines, and pupils are supported to interact appropriately at all times. Pupils are encouraged to engage in a variety of group activities, as well as differentiated tasks for individual learning styles.

Planning

In Reception, planning is organised at 3 stages. A curriculum map (long-term plan) is designed by the Early Years Pathway Leader at the beginning of the academic year, which details half-termly themes intended to motivate and inspire pupils. The curriculum maps guides teacher's planning to ensure that all relevant areas of the curriculum are covered at some point during the academic year, in an attempt to prevent repetition. Teachers use this curriculum map to filter into a medium term plan across each half term. Themes are flexible and can be adapted to specific interests of pupils. Teachers ensure that all planning responds to need, and if priority areas arise this is implemented.

At Wyre Forest School, we recognise that pupils may need curriculum milestones to be broken down into achievable steps, as well as having increased opportunities to repeat tasks to ensure a deeper level of understanding in order to consolidate and maintain skills. Medium term planning is devised to highlight intended outcomes for each pupil across the curriculum areas set for that half term. Teachers then plan activities across each week, building on the last, to promote a progression towards the intended goal, ensuring plenty of repetition and scaffolding to build upon a skill.

Weekly planning is then responsive to the previous week, and staff are able to see clear progression and set next steps, recognising levels of support pupils need to develop their skills. Continuous provision ensures opportunities for open-ended learning, and is often planned in the short term so as to meet needs and follow current lines of interest.

Assessment Cycle

Wyre Forest School use Sonar to track and assess pupil progress. Staff capture pupil learning and development using Evidence for Learning, taking photos and videos to build a picture of how skills progress over time. All pupils are baselined on arrival in our Reception, and attainment across the 7 areas of the EYFS is reported to the Government at the beginning and end of the Reception year. Teachers will attend pupil discussion meetings with the Senior Leadership Team to discuss and moderate progress.

We share information about progress with parent/carers at the end of the pupils' Reception year, using *WFS Progression Steps* in each of the areas of development. We also show parent/carers how much progress our pupils have made relative to their chronological age and developmental starting points. Progress is also shared with parent/carers at the Annual Review of their EHCP and parent/carer consultation evenings. Across the summer term, ongoing conversations will be had with parent/carers about which pathway their pupil will enter in year 1.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the class teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Phase Leader carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

