

Tweedmouth West First School

Early Years Policy

2024-25

At Tweedmouth West we believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage gives the children vital skills and experiences, and an attitude to learning that will have a great influence on their later years.

Through play, children learn

Intent	<p>At Tweedmouth West our aim is to create a learning environment and build relationships which support, enhance and invite a child's curiosity, confidence and individual competency to flourish regardless of backgrounds, circumstances or needs. We aim to work collaboratively with parents and carers to encourage independent, enthusiastic learners who thrive and reach their full potential. It is our intent that children who enter our Reception Class begin their lifelong learning journey by developing physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst also embedding a positive attitude to school and a love of learning.</p> <p>To ensure children make outstanding progress in Tweedmouth West EYFS, it is our intent to take into consideration their starting points and needs of our pupils as they begin their learning journey. Every child has access to a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which prepares them for now and for the future in terms of opportunities and experiences. Following personal interests and individual needs, allows us to plan and provide opportunities throughout our EYFS curriculum to support learning and development and achieve their next steps.</p> <p>Our EYFS curriculum aims to enable our children to be: Competent and creative learners; who are curious about the world around them.</p>

	<p>Secure and confident; who enjoy coming to school and learning new skills and knowledge building on their existing learning.</p> <p>Skillful communicators; who connect with others through language and play, ensuring that they play in a vocab rich environment.</p> <p>It is our intent to ensure that all children will receive the teaching of early reading through systematic, synthetic phonics to learn to read words and simple sentences accurately by the end of Reception.</p>
Implementation	<p>At Tweedmouth West, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (updated 2024). This is made up of four overriding principles which our early year’s education is based upon:</p> <p>Unique Child – Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.</p> <p>Positive Relationships – Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.</p> <p>Enabling Environments – Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.</p> <p>Learning and Development – Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year’s provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.</p> <p>Our curriculum provides a play-based and experiential learning environment, combined with focussed teaching and basic skills, to ensure children make rapid progress before moving on to Year 1. The children in Reception are provided with ample opportunities accessible in our indoor and outdoor provision. They engage in planned, focussed activities as well as self-initiated and free flow activities. The learning experiences within our Early Years are linked to the seven areas of learning and development within the EYFS. These areas are split into three prime areas and four specific areas.</p>

The **three prime areas** are those which the children should develop first and are considered most essential for the healthy development and future learning of our children. These include:

Physical Development – involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, core strength, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Communication and Language – involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development – involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

As children grow and make progress in the prime areas, this will help them to naturally develop skills within the four specific areas. These are:

Literacy – the early teaching of literacy involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics – the early teaching of mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in cardinality and counting, comparison, composition, pattern, measures, shape and space.

Understanding the World – this involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design – this involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their

	<p>thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.</p> <p>Children benefit from meaningful learning across the curriculum and staff plan resourcefully for opportunities for communication, sustained shared thinking and physical challenge to build on existing skills taking into account the *Characteristics of Effective Learning.</p> <p>Rich first hand experiences (inside, outdoors, visitors and school trips) to widen experiences, awe and wonderment. Exploratory learning and thinking creatively including problem solving across all areas of learning. New vocabulary and concepts through reading will excite and engage all learners which includes staff modelling standard English and asking high quality questions.</p> <p>Our curriculum will promote and support children’s emotional security and development of their character enabling children to take risks in a safe and secure environment. Supporting children to be active and to develop physically including giving clear messages to children why it is important to eat, drink and exercise as well as to be kind to others.</p>
Impact	<p>The curriculum we provide enables our children to develop socially and emotionally and encourages them to be resilient, curious individuals, with a desire to learn. Experiences will be revisited and demonstrated through being deeply engaged in play.</p> <p>The children at Tweedmouth West experience a smooth transition between Nursery, Reception and beyond. Effective communication and collaboration with local feeder nurseries ensure the children leave the EYFS with a solid foundation of learning of which to build upon.</p> <p>We use the online platform Seesaw to keep everyone in the learning loop by connecting teachers, children and families to support each child’s learning journey. This is supplemented with exercise books in Reception, which evidence to the children and their families the successes of the children throughout their time in Early Years.</p>

	<p>As a staff, we carry out regular internal moderation sessions and also ensure that staff attend external meetings and training to ensure that we feel confident with our judgements and that these judgements are consistent with a range of other settings. Assessment starts with careful observations which are then used to inform planning. Learning and teaching is thus effective when children feel a sense of belonging, curiosity and competence showing resilience and tenacity.</p>
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	<p>By monitoring assessment procedures regularly, we can effectively demonstrate what learning is taking place and how each child is progressing in all seven areas of the EYFS curriculum. Progress toward the ELGs will ensure a positive disposition to learn.</p>
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Early Years at Tweedmouth West First School is currently a pure Reception class and educates children whose fifth birthday falls within that academic year. Mrs Joanne Anderson is the Reception class teacher. She is supported closely by Teaching Assistant, Miss Sharon Patterson. Mrs Anderson is the Key Worker responsible for the children's pastoral care. We work closely with other providers in the area, Cubs and Kits, Kiln Hill Pre-School and Rascals.

*Characteristics of Effective Learning:

Both our environment and curriculum incorporate the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** – children will have time to keep trying if they encounter difficulties with support if needed, and their achievements are celebrated.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – we encourage and support children to develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

The Learning Environment:

Our Reception class is organised to enable children to explore and learn safely. There are designated areas in which children are able to be active, quiet, and creative. Children have access to both indoor and outdoor areas throughout the day. Reception class have their own outdoor area equipped with sand and water play which offers varied opportunities to explore and develop their skills. Outdoor activities encourage children to think about their learning differently and apply their knowledge in a variety of ways whilst using their senses and being physically active. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside. Spending time outdoors gives opportunities for healthy minds and bodies and learning things differently to when children are indoors, giving them a different perspective. The children complete a five minute active session every morning, designed to wake up their bodies and minds - this is known to the children as their morning song during their morning meeting.

Children can arrive at school from 8:45am with the teaching day starting at 08.55 am and finishing at 3:15pm.

Fruit and vegetables are provided free of charge at snack time. Milk is provided free of charge until the term of the child's fifth birthday. Lunch is from 12:00pm to 1:00pm. Meals are free for children up to the end of Year 2.

Inclusion:

In the Early Years, we plan to meet the needs of all children. This is achieved by ensuring that all genders, social and cultural backgrounds, ethnic groups, children with special educational needs and disabilities, children of all abilities and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds are included in planning. We plan activities and experiences which build on children's knowledge, skills and experiences while adapting teaching strategies in response to the children's needs. We use resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination.

The EYFS Curriculum – learning through play

At Tweedmouth West, we do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated, continuous provision or adult-led play activities provide the most effective learning opportunities. For the younger children there is a strong focus on the three prime areas. The role of the teacher is key to progressing children's skills through play and meaningful interactions. The learning environment is designed to enable children to explore, challenge and consolidate their own learning. This helps build their independence, resilience and confidence they need to be lifelong, reflective learners. We encourage children to explore their environment both indoors and outside. The Reception outdoor space and woodland area in the school grounds provide a safe outdoor space for children to use natural materials, to explore, construct, create and share. Outdoor clothes are available so children are not limited by seasons or weather.

Assessment:

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to determine interests, achievements and preferences to learning so that planning can be shaped to meet the needs of the children. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of incidental observations, these may be recorded on their on-line interactive learning journal 'Seesaw'. Staff take into account observations shared by parents / carers on Seesaw. This also enables on-going communication between school and parents and carers. In the initial weeks of Reception, staff complete a baseline assessment and children take part in assessments which are in line with the rest of the school, such as phonics.

At the end of each term, observations and assessments are undertaken to determine children's progress in line with the EYFS framework which informs next steps. At the end of the Reception year, staff complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Pupils are assessed against all 17 early learning goals indicating if the children are meeting expected levels of development (on track), or if they are not yet reaching expected levels (not on track).

Data is analysed on entry to Reception and at the end of each term.

Intimate Care:

The vast majority of children are able to carry out intimate care for themselves. However, depending on the child's age and stage of development, some may need some support:- eg dressing, toileting, wiping their bottom and changing underwear following an accident. We actively encourage parents to help children become independent with these tasks.

Partnership with Parents:

We know that parents/ carers are a child's first educators, and we aim for school and families to work closely to ensure that children have the best possible start to their educational journey.

Parents/carers are invited to take part in Parent Meetings termly, which gives opportunities to openly discuss children's progress and share information between school and home. We operate an open door policy that allows parents/carers to discuss concerns and developments, and staff will immediately approach parents if there are any concerns about their child's learning. Each term, topic webs are shared with families providing an overview of the weekly themes and learning opportunities.

We invite parents to visit the classroom informally to appreciate the work that has been produced and enjoy special events. In line with the rest of the school, Seesaw is used to communicate with parents/ carers and celebrate success. Parents are encouraged to add to their Seesaw page so that experiences can be shared with school.

We encourage a positive partnership by:

- Holding regular open sessions before children start in Reception
- Inviting all Reception children into the class before they start.
- Offering curriculum workshops for parents throughout the year with subject leaders
- Giving parents regular opportunities to discuss progress.
- Ongoing liaison with parents as detailed above.

- Providing parents with a curriculum overview (topic web)
- Providing a written report for parents in the Summer Term.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the teacher if they have any concerns
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, home and school: open sessions, workshops, sports events etc.

Transition:

We recognise that it is a huge change for children leaving the familiar pre-school settings and home and starting full time in Reception. We aim to make this transition as smooth as possible by:

- Staff attend regular partnership network meetings to ensure close communication between Tweedmouth West and pre school settings throughout the year.
- Pre-School children and their families are invited to eat lunch in the school hall, where they can familiarise themselves with routines and meet staff
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants visit Pre-School throughout the year, to pop in and allow children to become familiar with staff in school.
- Visits to Reception Class for new starters in the Summer term.
- Transition meeting with Pre-School leaders and Pre-School staff.
- New starters meeting for parents.
- Parent information pack provided, including 'About Me' booklet for parents and children to return to school.
- Open door policy
- Parent meetings termly, beginning in the Autumn Term
- Parent open nights.

At the end of Reception year, we facilitate transition to Year 1 by working closely with the Year 1 teacher, sharing all final assessments and reports, including characteristics of effective learning. There are lots of opportunities for the children to visit the Year 1 classroom, and for the Year 1 teacher to visit Reception Class.

Safeguarding:

Early Years practitioners have a duty of care to comply with the welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024). All Early Years staff have completed safeguarding training that enables them to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect, and staff knowledge is regularly updated. Mrs J Anderson is Deputy Safeguarding Lead in school. The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school is Mrs J Dalrymple (Headteacher), who takes responsibility for safeguarding children. The Designated person will liaise with relevant children's services agencies as appropriate. We follow the policy and procedures set out in the whole school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies. Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which is available on the school website.

Joanne Anderson
November 2024