



Date Approved by Governing Body	September 2024
Next Review Date by Governing	September 2026

'Let your light shine!'



Make your light shine, so others will see the good you do and will praise your Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:16

Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery

Early Years Policy

Core Christian Values: Love, Trust, Hope, Respect

QEGSMAT (the Trust and its schools) believe every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances.

A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

QEGSMAT greatly values the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

The Trust will seek to provide:

Quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind with challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.

A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.

Partnership working between practitioners and parents. Each child should be assigned a key person to ensure that each child's learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person will work to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development.

Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Aims:

The children joining Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery come from a variety of backgrounds and have already learnt a great deal. The education we offer our children in the Foundation Stage aims to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Provide a safe and stimulating environment, inside and outside where children can explore and foster a love of learning
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally ensuring that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Provide high expectations to encourage children to develop resilience and problem-solving skills and to become creative and critical thinkers
- Create an enabling environment where we make the most of every opportunity to support and develop children's vocabulary and communication skills.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Inspire a love of reading and ensure that children develop skills to decode and read simple words and phrases so that they will become more confident and fluent readers in Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that our children are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into year 1 and beyond.

Learning and Development:

Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2024. In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

In organising and implementing the curriculum our school ensure that there is a broad range of activities and experiences, which include the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and Exploring:** Children investigate and experience things, and “have a go”.

Effective teachers provide an environment that supports children’s curiosity and exploration, allowing them to learn through discovery and experimentation.

- **Active Learning:** Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.

Effective teachers reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice to support each child’s unique learning journey.

- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Effective teachers encourage children to think creatively, make connections, and develop problem-solving skills.

These characteristics are essential in the Early Years, as they enable children to develop a strong foundation for future learning and help them become confident, curious, and independent learners. By incorporating these characteristics into daily learning, teachers create an environment that fosters a love of learning and supports children’s unique learning styles and abilities.

Curriculum Intent

At Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery we will nurture and enrich each individual child, enabling them to access a play-based curriculum. Through rich experiential learning children will gain knowledge and vocabulary which will help them to develop a deeper understanding of the world they live in.

The EYFS provides a secure foundation for future learning and development and through our school vision:

‘Make your light shine, so others will see the good you do and will praise your Father in heaven’. Matthew 5:16 and the core Christian Values: *Love, Trust, Hope and Respect* support our children to develop a love of learning, show kindness and shine in everything they do.

We work closely and collaboratively with parents, building positive relationships understanding the importance that home experiences have on children’s development now and in the future.

Implementation

At Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery we follow the Early Years Foundation Statutory Framework.

The framework specifies the requirements for learning and development. This covers the 7 areas of learning, which are:

The Prime areas:

Communication and Language,

Physical development,

Personal and social development.

The Specific areas:

Literacy,

Maths,

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design.

In Early Years we recognise that children learn best when they feel happy, safe and secure. We provide high quality teaching across all areas of the curriculum both inside and outdoors. During the school day children take part in whole class learning with a qualified teacher or a TA (who is trained in early education). Adults lead these sessions which provide learning that is age appropriate. Children also take part in small group learning which is led by a teacher / TA. These adult led sessions support all children to consolidate or extend learning.

We encourage children to learn through play and exploration (continuous provision activities) where children access learning of their choice which allows them to learn within a carefully planned balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities. The staff work hard to develop positive relationships with the children and take time to learn about the children's interests and likes to support their learning.

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and our aim is to develop a love of reading right from the start. Children are exposed to a range of quality books that not only develop a love of reading, but have been chosen specifically to develop their oracy, vocabulary and comprehension which together enable individuals to communicate effectively, engage with others, and express themselves confidently and accurately.

Books are used for termly learning across the EYFS, in adult led activities and during daily story sessions. Children regularly take-home books to share with parents.

We teach high quality phonics using 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' which begins in Nursery with pre-phonics activities, language development and nursery rhymes followed by a systematic approach to teaching reading which is in place to support all children in learning to read.

Early intervention is a prominent feature of our teaching and learning practice and appropriate interventions are put into place to enable children to make progress towards the national expectations at the end of the reception year.

We have close links with local nurseries which support a smooth and settled transition into school and strong parental partnerships which empower parents to support their child's learning at home.

Impact:

We want our children to be happy, kind and confident and through daily learning opportunities widen their knowledge and understanding of the world around them, setting ambitious expectations for all children. Our curriculum celebrates diversity and supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the school's vision: *'Let your light shine!'*

And the Core Christian Values: *Love, Trust, Hope, Respect*

Children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. Teaching and learning in the Early Years has a positive impact on the pupils supporting them to become happy and resilient learners who are ready for the next stage of their education. Children are given a broad range of vocabulary, knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

Pedagogy:

- Caring;
- Starting with the unique child;
- Play based;
- Experiential;
- Knowledge based (understand how children learn and develop);
- Vocabulary and language rich.

Assessment:

Ongoing assessment at Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Practitioners observe children to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are then used to inform future planning. Observations and assessments are recorded on children's online learning journeys which parents can access.

The EYFS undertakes a summative assessment of the level of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding, abilities and attainment against the early learning goals (ELG) and their readiness for year 1

Children's development levels are assessed as the year progresses. If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

Contributions to the assessments:

Accurate assessment will depend on contributions from a range of perspectives, including those of the child. Practitioners will involve children fully in their own assessment by encouraging them to communicate about and review their own learning. Assessment will build on the insights of all adults who have significant interactions with the child. Adults with different roles within school will be able to make varying contributions. Accurate assessment requires a two-way flow of information between school and home. A review of a child's achievements will include those demonstrated at home and parents/carers are encouraged to add to their child's experiences through the online portal: Tapestry (parents are provided with a log in to this system by the school).

Inclusion:

At Waterhouses CE Primary Academy and Nursery we have a positive approach to the inclusion of children as stated in all of our policies. All children are valued and given the opportunity to achieve their full potential regardless of gender, ability, disability, special educational need, ethnicity and cultural or social background. We aim to overcome any barriers that might exist and provide for particular needs and disabilities regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

Safeguarding and welfare:

All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

All members of staff receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

EYFS Lead: Joy Hulme

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Joy Hulme

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Rachel Linton

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence.

Staffing:

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable and trained to a recognised level.

Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

There will be at least one member of staff who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the school premises at all times and will accompany children on any school outings.

Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will hold a PFA certificate. All newly qualified staff with a Level 2 or 3 qualification will be PFA trained. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years.

Information sharing:

Information is stored in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2024) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2023) 'The Prevent duty'

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2024) 'Statutory framework for the EYFS'
- DfE (2021) 'EYFS profile handbook'
- DfE (2021) 'Development Matters'
- Early Education (2021) 'Birth to 5 Matters'
- UK Council for Internet Safety 'Education for a Connected World'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

<https://www.qegsmat.com/documents/policies/> and also in conjunction with each school's localised procedures:

<https://waterhouses.staffs.sch.uk/key-information/policies/>

The Governing Body will review the School's Early Year's policy once every two years, or more regularly if legislative or policy changes necessitate an earlier review.

Date Reviewed:

Date Ratified: