



# *Early Years at Western House Academy*

*Where every opportunity shapes a life*

Western House Academy

EYFS Statement of Intent

## The Curriculum at WHA

We are proud and excited about the curriculum at WHA because, after all, that is what we get up in the morning to deliver! Every subject in the curriculum offered at WHA stands on **four broad principles, Knowledge, experience, breadth and values**. These underpin every decision teachers make in order to teach effectively. The knowledge taught is based upon the **Early Learning Goals** and the **National Curriculum**, the children have **meaningful experiences** in their learning, the **breadth** of the curriculum is designed so no subject is left out and every subject has an integrity – and the knowledge experiences and skills from the very start in the EYFS and lower down the school feed into the subjects and units in the upper school, ensuring progress and a wealth of knowledge for the children to draw upon as they meet new challenges and learning. We promote our **values** in every aspect of the curriculum and encourage **collaborative work** as well as **individual scholarship**.

At Western House Academy (WHA) our aim is to build on the strengths of our rich diversity as a vibrant framework in which children: discover a love of learning that gives them the momentum to succeed; become academically and socially confident and make ambitious progress at every stage, whatever their background or circumstance. The four key aspects of this are: breadth, knowledge, experiences and our values

## **What is our aim for the EYFS curriculum in Western House Academy?**

The overarching aim of the EYFS at Western House is to help young children to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes of staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing. At Western House we believe children learn best through physical and mental challenges. The curriculum is delivered using a mixture of child initiated play and adult led activities. Active learning takes place because play is purposeful and children are engaged. We believe in 'personalised learning' whereby we plan for children as individuals ensuring activities are geared to their interests, style of learning and level of development. Parents are made very welcome in the Reception classes and information about what the children have been doing is shared with them at regular intervals. They also contribute to their own children's learning, via Tapestry our online learning journal.

With the introduction of the new Development Matters 2021 assessment is now used with a holistic approach to the whole child and practitioner knowledge will inform our end of year Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

## **How does our Early Years and Foundation Stage to launch a life-long love of learning?**

In Western House children in the Early Years are introduced to a safe and nurturing environment that allows them to learn and play together and in turn we teach them how to respect other people, how to cooperate and share and respect the rights of others. Through carefully planned lessons and experienced early years practitioners we are able to set the foundations so that children can develop their enjoyment of learning, be engaged, motivated and show a determination to succeed.

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**With our EYFS, every opportunity shapes a life by including the four key aspects of our curriculum in what we do by:**

### **Developing Knowledge**

The Early Years Curriculum is intended to begin with the 'big picture' what we want the children to know and be able to do. Our starting points would be noticing what the children are interested and then gathering this information to plan, act and review. To build further on children's interests high quality play would be supported by a well-organised environment which builds and widens those interests through the use of new materials, experiences and well planned activities.

### **Developing and providing experiences in learning**

Here at Western House we create a rich and stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors where children can choose their own play and activities. Adults join in, offer new ideas and challenge and extend the children's learning where appropriate. We also model and explain ways of doing things which can also encourage children to collaborate and learn from each other. We also 'dig deeper' by discussing ideas with children, challenging them through careful questioning to help extend and develop their understanding.

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## Developing breadth

The EYFS curriculum allows the children to be active learners, be creative and think critically and teaches them how to play and explore. Therefore at Western House we provide high quality, open ended resources to play with freely indoors and outdoors such as when using wooden blocks to make different structures, children can incorporate both **Expressive Art and Design** and the **Mathematical Early Learning Goal of Understanding 2D and 3D Shapes**. Additionally White Rose Maths provides an in depth and challenging programme for children to develop a positive attitude to **counting, learning numbers to ten** and developing the correct use of in depth knowledge and **mathematical vocabulary**. We want to encourage the children to be confident in answering questions and not to be afraid to make mistakes. Children can reach their Early Learning Goal of **Understanding the World** by closely observing plants, animals and nature in their natural habitat and then representing this by drawing pictures, painting or collage. Children are offered activities such as threading, pouring, planting and making junk models to enhance their fine motor and physical skills and achieve the Early learning Goal in physical development.

**Literacy:** In our regular shared reading sessions children are taught how to handle books, understand the use of capital letters and full stops, read text from left to right and how to handle books carefully. Regular daily phonics sessions, through our Essential Letters and Sounds scheme, teach children letter formation as they learn the sounds to each letter and consistent harder to read and spell words introduced each day enable the children to identify that these are words that are tricky to spell.

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Shared writing supports our teaching of Early Learning Goal, **‘writing short sentences with words, with known sound-letter correspondences using capital letters and full stops’**. We encourage children to say the words before writing and we model how to read writing to ensure it makes sense.

The **Communication and Language Early Learning Goal** underpins all seven areas of learning and we understand the need to have high quality conversations throughout the day, with both adults and peers, to provide a language rich environment. Adults are able to model and comment on what the children are doing, add new vocabulary, engage the children in conversation and role play and consistently use stories, rhymes and poems to embed new words in a range of contexts.

Children in our Early Years Foundation Stage are encouraged to work independently and quickly learn to work with a great deal of concentration and application. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activity, and close questioning and scaffolding help to extend the learning. These all provide an excellent basis for their next steps in learning. The breadth of experiences we offer to the pupils is further enhanced by planned activities which provide regular memorable events, which include visits and school performances. By providing these activities children have time to develop their ideas, make connections and repeat ideas where necessary.

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## **Developing our Key Values**

At Western House children are taught how to develop their sense of responsibility and be a member of the community. Children are introduced from an early stage to regular EYFS assemblies to promote and encompass the Western House values. A different value is outlined every week and children are given examples of how to incorporate Western house values through regular EYFS assemblies to promote and encompass these values, both in their life, school and home experiences. Children should increasingly follow our values and understand why they are important. To allow the children to show more confidence in social situations, shared circle times allow the children the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas and show an understanding of the need to listen to others.

## **How is the EYFS organised and why?**

The curriculum in Early Years is designed to provide a broad and balanced education that meets the needs of all pupils. It facilitates them to gain the skills, knowledge and understanding, as they start out on their educational journey, supporting them to progress from their individual starting points and preparing them for the next stage of their education.

Our ethos in Early Years is to support children's personal, social and emotional development so that they feel safe and secure and are ready to learn.

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We provide thematic topics each half term that excite and engage children, building on their own interests and developing their experiences of the world around them using the seven areas of learning in the ELG.

We recognise that all children come into our setting with varied experiences and all staff work hard to ensure that the learning opportunities provided widen their knowledge and understanding of the world, setting ambitious expectations for all children

### **What is the impact of how we organise and deliver the EYFS?**

Our ethos in Early Years is to support children's personal, social and emotional development so that they feel safe and secure and are ready to learn.

Through the seven areas of learning we provide topics that excite and engage children, building on own interests and developing their experiences of the world around them. We recognise that all children come into our setting with varied experiences and all staff work hard to ensure that the learning opportunities provided widen their knowledge and understanding of the world, setting ambitious expectations for all children.

Children develop their characteristics of learning and are able to apply their knowledge to a range of situations making links and explaining their ideas and understanding. Children are confident to take risks and discuss their successes and failures with adults drawing on their experiences to improve or adjust what they are doing. Children develop skills across all areas of the curriculum including literacy, mathematics and physical development using these in different ways.

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Children at the end of Foundation stage will have developed essential knowledge and skills required for everyday life and lifelong learning. Children at Western House Academy will be well rounded, happy, inquisitive and successful learners.

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