Welcome to Reception!

Whittle Academy

2026-27

Whittle
Academy

Inspire Education Trust
Together we achieve, individually we grow

Welcome (or welcome back!) to Whittle Academy! We are so excited that you are going to be starting our Reception and cannot wait to get to know you and to help you make lots of new friends. Being in Reception is the most wonderful adventure where you will play and learn new skills every day. By the end of the year, you will be able to do so many amazing things. You will have explored the world around and most importantly had so much fun!

This book is to help you understand what being in Reception at Whittle Academy will be like. It is written for you (with a few bits of extra information for your grown-ups).
We hope you enjoy looking at the pictures and that this helps you to get as excited about school as we all are!

Our school Vision and Ethos

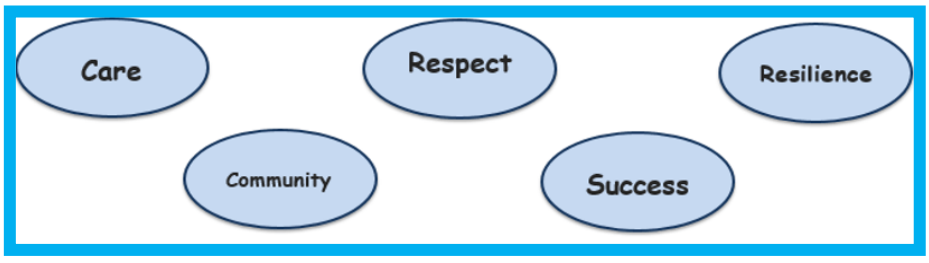
At Whittle we soar beyond what we image possible.

At Whittle we give you the power to take flight.

At Whittle everyone will achieve.

Our school vision is inspired by the famous engineer and aviator 'Sir Frank Whittle', who our school is named after. Our whole school vision is linked to the power of flight and children 'soaring' in all aspects of their development.

These are our core values at Whittle Academy.



We encourage children to show **care for themselves**, **care for each other** and **care for the world** around them.

Our Staff

These are the names of some of the teachers who help make sure that everything at school is as brilliant as it can possible be.

CEO of Inspire:	Mrs L Whitehouse
Head of Primary:	Mr R Darling
Headteacher:	Mrs M Harris
Deputy Headteacher:	Mrs D Morgan-Smith (EYFS & KS1 Lead)

These are the grown-ups who will be helping you in Reception are…

Miss Jamal
(Class Teacher)

Mrs Smith
(Cover Supervisor)

Miss Barrett
(Teaching Assistant)

Our class

You will notice our classes at Whittle are named after birds.

Our Reception class will be called 'Robins' class.

How will we get to know you?

Home Visits

For children starting Reception in September who have not attended Nursery at Whittle Academy, we will arrange a time with your grown-ups when we can come and visit you first. This will take place in July. You can show us your favourite toys and tell us about what you like to do.

When we come to visit you, we will ask you and your grown-up some questions that will help us find out lots of information about you.

Before we come to visit you please help your grown-up to fill in the 'All About Me' booklet that we will share with you.

(If your child is already attending our Nursery, we will not need to arrange another home visit, but you may wish to fill out another 'All About Me' booklet with your child, as things may have changed a lot since they joined us last year.)

Visiting Your New Classroom

Before you start school in September, we will invite you in to meet us and to see your new classroom on 'Transition Day'. We will let you know the date for this very soon. There will be lots of toys out that you can play with and lots of new friends that you will get to meet.

Starting School

On your first day in Reception you will be put into 2 smaller groups. We will make sure that you are in a group with some of your friends from Nursery or any other children that you might know from outside of school. Some of you might come in for the morning and some of you will come in after lunch. We will be sending out a letter to you grown-ups which will give the details of your first day at school and the timings.

On your first day your grown-up will take you to your classroom and help you put your bag and coat away. Then you will be able to give them a big hug and say good-bye. Don't worry though your grown-up always come back at the end of the day for big cuddles and to find out all that you have been doing up to!

On your second at school you will get to meet everyone in your class. There will be 30 children altogether. On this day you will stay all morning and go home before lunch time.

On the third day at school you will stay for the whole morning and for your lunch too! (We will tell you more about lunch time later in this booklet). After lunch, your grown-ups will come and pick you up and take you home.

After those three days, you will then be staying at school for the whole day. This booklet tells you about all the amazing activities that you will be going to do when you are at school.

The first few weeks can be tiring and bewildering even if your child is used to Nursery or being with a childminder. Don't worry if your child becomes upset; we are used to dealing with this situation. Children usually stop crying quickly and we can phone you or contact you via Tapestry to reassure you later in the session.

Our School Day in Reception

7.30am – 8.30am	Wraparound Before school provision is open. This must be pre-booked and paid for via Arbor
8.30am	Main gates to school open
8.35am	School starts and your teacher will welcome you at the classroom door.
8.50am	Morning Register, Phonics, Literacy Lesson and continuous provision
11.45am	Lunch Time
12.45pm	Afternoon Register and Maths Lesson and continuous provision
3.15pm	End of school day
3.15-4.30pm	Wraparound After school provision is open. This must be pre-booked and paid for via Arbor

Snack Time

Free milk and fruit are available and we encourage all children to access this each day. If your child is not able to have milk for whatever reason, please let us know and we will speak with your about alternative arrangements. We also encourage children to bring in a water bottle from home to keep in school to access throughout the day. Please make sure the water bottle has your child's name on.

Lunchtime

Packed Lunch - Children may bring a packed lunch and drink which should be in a named container/lunch box. This will be stored in the Reception Classroom during the day. Please do not send in fizzy drinks, anything with nuts or unhealthy snacks or sweets.

School Lunches - Our meals are prepared on the premises by Catering Academy. Menus are displayed on the school website and run on a three weekly cycle. If you would like your child to receive a hot meal they will have a

choice of a few options including vegetarian. There is a help yourself salad bar and filled jacket potatoes are also available. The staff in the kitchen will be made aware of any allergies you have informed us of. **School dinner is FREE for all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.**

Key information

Absences and illness

At Whittle Academy, attendance is a key area of priority. Absence, particularly in early education, has a considerable effect on children's development. If your child is away from Reception because of any illness please notify us as to the reason on the first day of absence. We strongly discourage parents to book holidays in term time.
If your child suffers from a medical condition requiring treatment such as an inhaler, we will require up to date medication to be kept in school.
It is important that we can always contact parents in cases of emergency.
Please inform school immediately if your telephone number changes.

Safeguarding

All schools take the safety and well-being of the children in their care very seriously. Our safeguarding policy is on our website and we would delighted to talk to you further about this. Our Pastoral Manager is Luke Harris. You can contact him via the class teacher or the school office.

School Uniform

We are keen for the children to wear full school uniform (which must be clearly named) as uniform provides smart, practical clothing which is not too expensive. Our uniform can be purchased at www.myclothing.com and just type in 'Whittle Academy' or CV2 2LH.

Our uniform consists of:

- Grey or black bottoms (trousers/shorts/skirts)
- White polo shirt or blouse
- Blue cardigan or sweatshirt (school logo optional)
- Sensible, black shoes (Velcro fastenings please!)
- Blue and white checked summer dress

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of **naming** everything. We do our best to help the children put their things away, but is far easier to locate a missing jumper in the classroom if it is named. Also remember to put a name label in shoes and coats as many children often have similar ones!

We want you to be as independent as you can in Reception. To help you do this we would love you to have a pair of shoes that

you can put on and off and do up yourself. We would also like you to have a named pair of wellington boots that you can leave at Reception and wear every day when we play and explore outside.

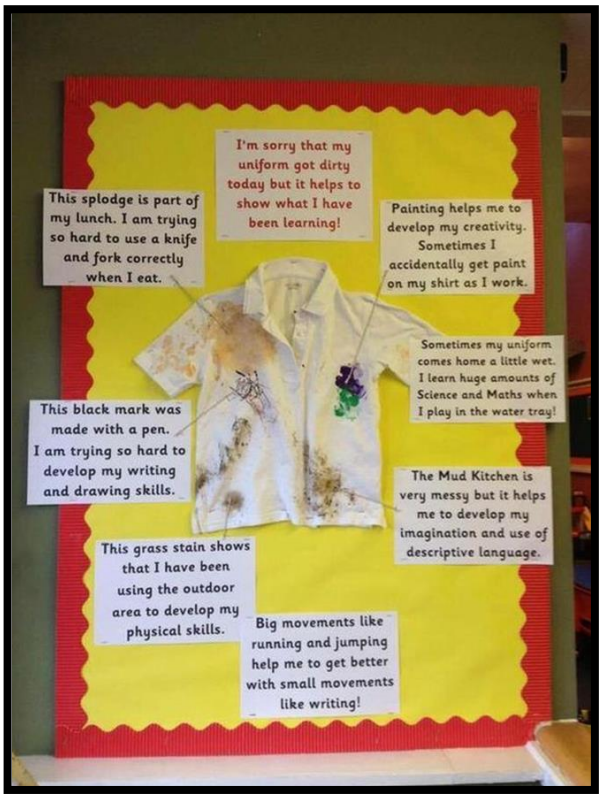
What does your child need to bring with them to school?

Lots of the fun activities that your child will be able to explore are very messy. We do have aprons for them to wear but it's sometimes hard to stay clean when they are having fun. Please can provide a named bag with some spare clothes in which include a change of underwear and socks, a top, some bottoms and a jumper or cardigan. Please can you bring your child's bag to school every day, they will be able to hang it up on their peg just in case we need it.

Children will also be given a school reading book, diary and folder. This needs to come into school with them **every day** please.

We play outside in the outdoor area **every day.**

- In winter your child will need to wear a coat, gloves and a woolly hat.
- In the summer you child will need to wear a sun hat, bring in some sun cream and wear clothes that keep their neck and shoulders covered.



What should you leave at home?

Your child does not need to bring any of their own toys in to school. We have plenty of fun things to play with here and we don't want their toys to get accidentally lost or broken.
We encourage children not to wear jewelry to school for safety reasons, but understand that this may not always be possible for all for faith-based reasons.

What will help me be independent in Reception?

We want you to be as independent as you can in Reception as you are becoming so grown up. You will be allowed to go to the toilet whenever you need to go. Just tell a grown-up. We have our own toilets in Reception so you won't have far to go. If you do have a little accident please do not worry, just make sure you bring a named bag with some spare clothes in and we can help you get changed.

Where will I put my things?

You will have your own peg in Reception, this will be your space to hang your bag and coat.

The Early Years Curriculum

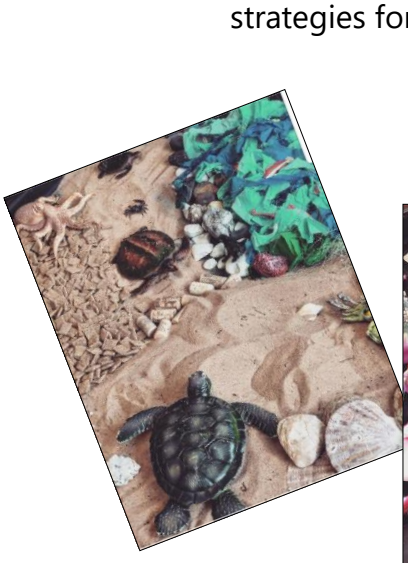
In September 2021, a the Early Years Statutory Framework and curriculum guidance was introduced. For us at Whittle this felt like a big opportunity modify our practice and continue to develop all the things that we believe are so brilliant about Early Years at Whittle.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is organised to take care of and develop the whole child and not just their academic learning. Our EYFS curriculum is split into 7 areas of learning, 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

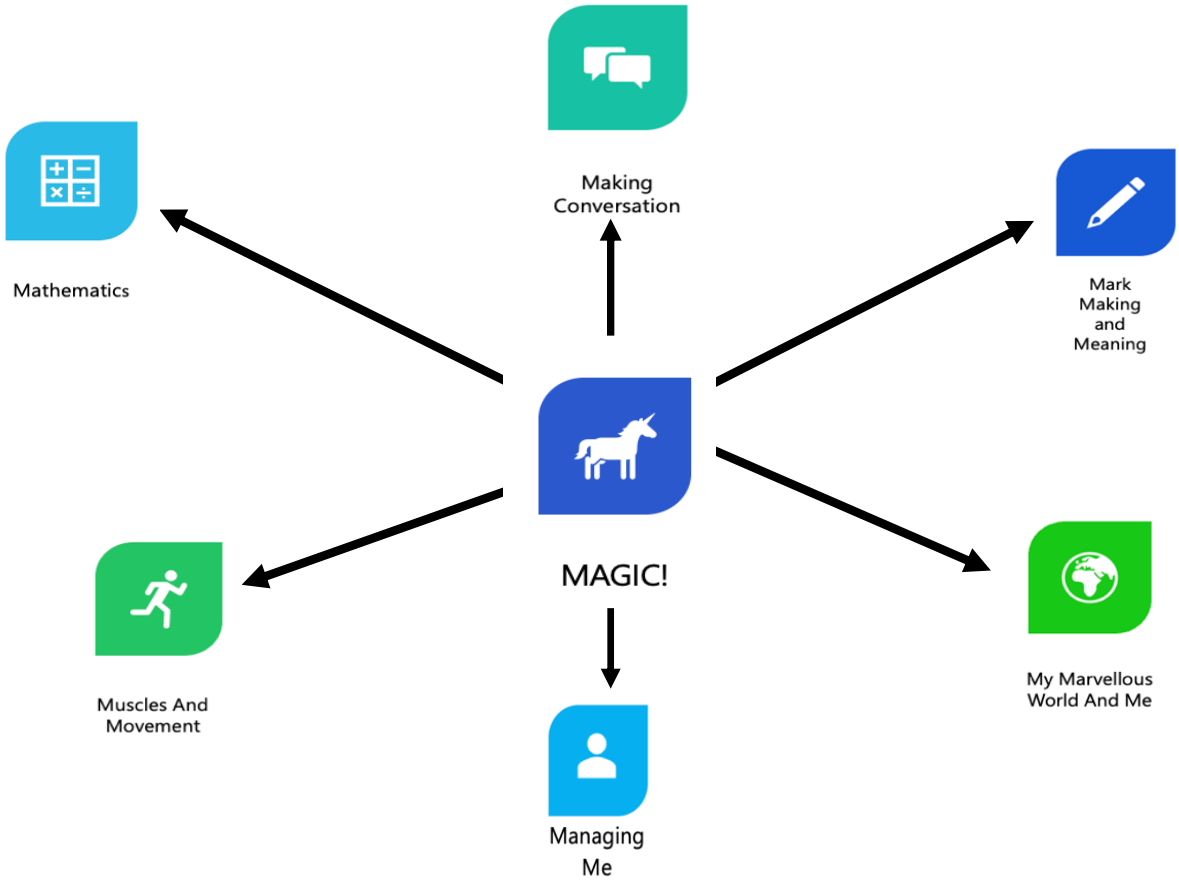
Our EYFS curriculum also includes the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**. These focus not on what children know but **how** children learn.

- **Playing and Exploring** – our children investigate and experience things and events around them and 'have a go.'
- **Active Learning** – our children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – our children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different and experiences and develop strategies for doing things.



The 5 Ms

At Whittle this is just the start. We have designed our own bespoke curriculum that encompasses the 7 areas of learning and the characteristics of learning in an engaging and exciting curriculum that we call **The Ms.**



We prioritise **making conversations** and learning to communicate, teaching and supporting children to **manage** themselves and their friendships, **mark making** and understanding the **meaning** of marks, developing secure early **mathematical** skills, exploring the **marvelous world** around them, and giving children the opportunities to use and develop their **muscles and movement**.

Magic is at the heart of all we do, making sure that our children are engaged and excited in all their learning. This does not mean we will be teaching your children card tricks but that we find engaging and exciting ways to introduce topics and themes to your children. This could be anything from building Superhero dens in Nursery to finding a beanstalk has grown in one of the Reception classrooms as part of their learning about Jack and the Beanstalk.

How will your child learn by playing?

You are going to be very busy in Reception and you will spend a lot of your time playing. That is because playing is one of the best ways you can learn! Playing helps you to develop your talking, to manage and understand how you are feeling and to help you make new friends. You will be able to practice new ideas and skills, to take risks, show imagination and solve problems. In Reception you will get the chance to play inside and outside! Here are a few examples of how the toys and activities we have in Reception will help you to learn:

- Sand and water play can be an early introduction to science and maths, eg learning that water is fluid, not solid, and that it can be measured in different sized containers.
- Playing with dough, drawing and painting pictures, dressing up, play ing with dolls can encourage creativity, imagination and expression of feelings.
- Building blocks, jigsaws and shape sorters can help with recognising different shapes and sizes, putting things in order and developing logic.
- Playing ball games, dancing, running, climbing all help to develop body movement, strength, flexibility and co-ordination skills.
- Games help with turn taking, sharing and mixing with others.
- Singing, playing simple music instruments help to develop rhythm, listening and hearing.
- The role-play area is a wonderful place for make-believe, dressing up, trying out different roles. It provides scope for developing imagination, language, sharing, co-operation and mathematics.
- Through cooking the children are able to discover the properties of different types of food as well as developing language, mathematical and scientific skills.
- Reading and learning stories. Writing and mark-making. Children will also develop these skills through daily Phonics sessions.

- You will have the opportunity to play outside most days. It is important that children of Reception age develop their climbing, sliding, and jumping skills. The children have an opportunity to play in the mud kitchen as well as riding bikes and scooters.

What will I do at School?

We will play inside and outside at school every day. There are so many fun activities for you to explore. Here are a few ...

Number and Shape

Reading and Stories

Writing

Craft and Creativity

Technology

Fun outside

Here are a few examples of how the toys and activities we have in Reception will help you to learn:

You will love our role-play and Small World areas where you can play and use your imagination!

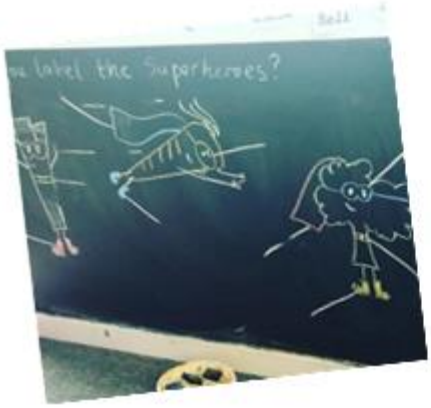
Visit the bakery and serve some customers!

Phonics & Early Reading

In Reception we are always learning and using lots of new and interesting words and listening to the sounds and rhymes in them. In the Autumn term, we will start to learn the letter sounds and how to form the letters. To do this we use a phonics and reading scheme called Read, Write Inc which is packed full of rhymes, movement and sound games. If you have been to our Nursery or another setting that teachers phonics, you will already know lots about these sounds!

Writing

You will have lots of opportunities to develop your writing skills in Reception. Using a variety of writing equipment, you will be able to make marks and symbols and write words and sentences using the sounds you learn in Phonics.



Tapestry – Online Learning Journals

In both Nursery and Reception we will will share your child's learning with you via their online learning journal. We do this via an app called 'Tapestry'. This is free for parents to download and access and you will be able to see photographs, videos and messages from your child's class teacher, updating you on your child's progress in school. We also encourage families to upload photos and videos of what they children get up to at home. We then share this with their friends during 'Tapestry Talk Time'. This is a brilliant way of supporting your child with their speaking and listening skills, boosts the children's confidence and is a great way of helping staff learn more about your child on personal level.

We will also use Tapestry posts to communicate any upcoming important dates, little reminders and more general information about school that parents/carers will need to know.

Here's some more detailed information about Tapestry…

An easy-to-use and secure online learning journal helping staff and families celebrate their children's learning and development

Tapestry builds a very special record of a child's experiences, development and learning journey through their early years and primary education. Using photos, videos, and diary entries, a teacher or early years educator, along with the child's parents or carers, and the child themselves if they're ready, 'weaves' the story of the child and how they are growing and developing. The Tapestry platform then works seamlessly to enable these memories to be kept as a permanent record of each child's unique journey. All information held in the platform is stored securely and can be downloaded and shared as required. Parents or carers are able to view their child's progress, the activities provided for them, and how much fun they're having, whilst also uploading their own comments and media.

What can you do to make sure that you child is ready for Reception?

There are some things that you can start working on with your child to make sure that they are ready for school. These include everything from practising putting their coat on to writing their names. There are also lots of other things that you can do to support your child with the transition to school. Here are a few ideas...

-Talk to them and listen to them
- Sing songs and Nursery rhymes together
- Play games with them – practise taking turns
- Read books to them
- Visit your local library.
- Teach them to take care of books – how do you turn pages carefully?
- Count regularly

E.g. How many buttons on this dress?
How many cups on the table?

- Recognise different sizes

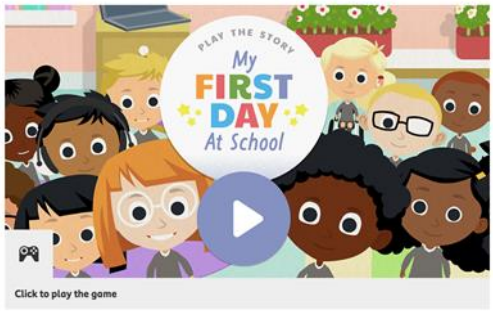
E.g. Large/small
Thick/thin

- Talk about shapes and colours.

E.g. Sort and match objects.

- Give your child the opportunity to write and draw and scribble using pens, crayons, felt tips and pencils.
- Practise self-care skills
  - Go to the toilet and wash and dry hands?
  - Put on/take off coats?
  - Put on/take off shoes?
  - Hold and use scissors?

There are also some fantastic books and resources that you can use with your child to begin talking about starting school.



This is a lovely game that can be found on the BBC Bitesize website. You can create your own character and choose what school uniform they are going to wear.

Below are some lovely books that you could use to start talking about starting school.

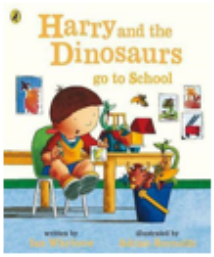
Lulu's First Day by Anna McQuinn

Lucy and Tom go to School by Shirley Hughes

Starting School by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

We are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold

Wiffy Wilson: The Wolf who wouldn't go to School by Caryl Hart



Harry and the Dinosaurs go to School by Ian Whybrow

It is good to talk…

For some of you your child's first day of school cannot come soon enough! For others the thought of your child starting Reception may make you feel worried and anxious. However you may be feeling, one thing that we ask of you is that you talk to your child about starting school. Let them talk to you about any worries that they may have or what they are looking forward to. Show them that you are excited about the new adventure that they are about to start and use this booklet to talk about what the school day will look like for them.

We are not only here for the children, but for our parents and community too. If you ever need help, advice or support please do come and chat to us and if there is anything at all we can do to help, we will.

Thank you for reading this booklet. We hope it has given you all the information you will need before your child starts with us. If there is anything else you need to know, please do not hesitate to come and speak to us. We really are looking forward to working with you to make sure that your child has the best possible start to their time at school!

We cannot wait to welcome your child to Reception!

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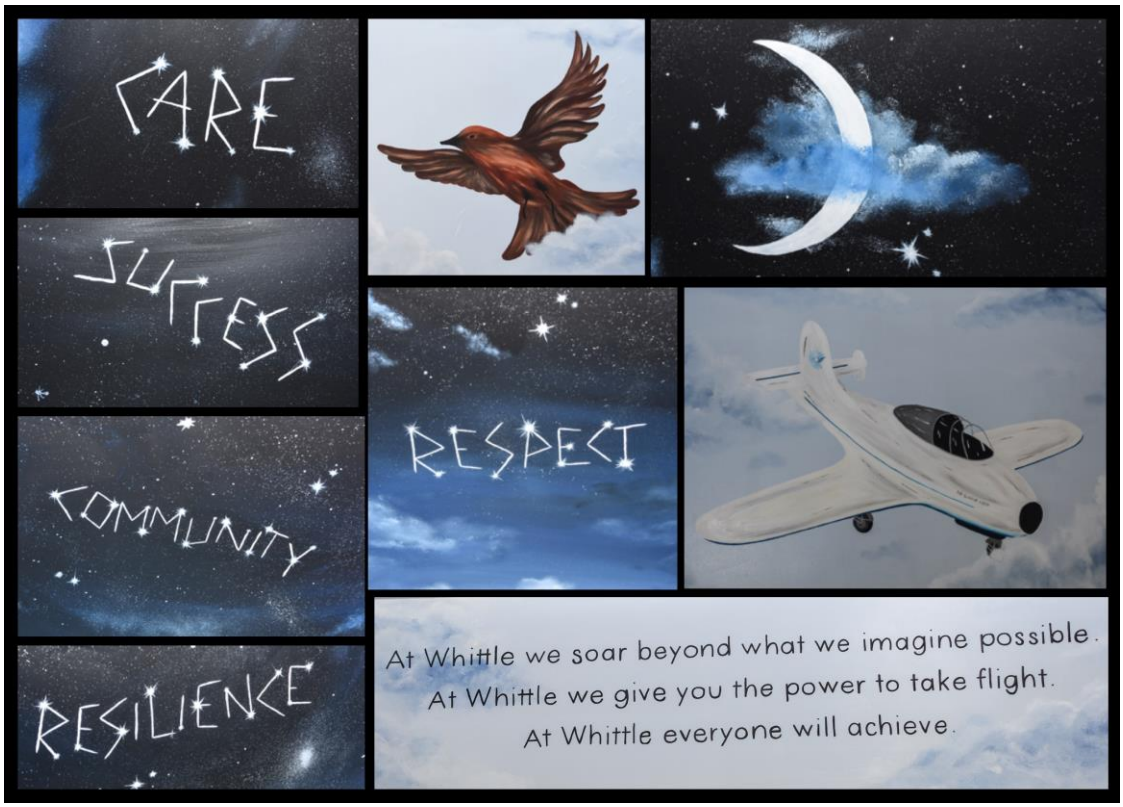
Miss Jamal, Miss Barratt,
& Mrs Morgan-Smith



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