

Whitley Lodge First School becomes latest Prem Aware School



The Smallest Things baby charity names Whitley Lodge First School as a Prem Aware School

[Research](#) tells us that, on average, there will be two to three children in every typical classroom who were born prematurely (before 37 weeks). While this does not automatically mean they will have additional educational needs, it does increase the chances they will require extra support.

Training, awareness & feedback

Whitley Lodge First School in Whitley Bay has met all three Prem Aware requirements to gain the award: accessing the [free PRISM e-learning](#) to train staff; asking parents if children were born prematurely as part of the admissions process; and requesting feedback from parents on any extra support provided.

By becoming a Prem Aware School, the teaching staff will have a better understanding of the lasting effects of premature birth, be able to identify issues early and provide the practical and emotional support children may need on their education journey.

Sharon Train, EYFS Manager at Whitley Lodge First School commented: "At Whitley Lodge First School, we strongly believe that all children should be given equal opportunities to learn and excel regardless of their starting points. We feel it is of great importance that information is shared re a child's birth history as we recognise and understand the impact that premature birth can have on the long-term intellectual, social, physical and emotional development of a child. We also acknowledge the additional burden this can place on a child's family if this is not identified with additional support offered and appropriate strategies applied to help a child's all round development."

Catriona Ogilvy, founder of [The Smallest Things](#), says "This is great news for families of children born prematurely who attend Whitley Lodge First School. Our recent survey revealed nine out of 10 parents of children born prematurely felt there was a need for more awareness and understanding in schools. Having trained teachers who know what to look out for and how to help, will make a big difference to children in the classroom. We hope this will inspire other schools to take this step."

Further information:

- [The Smallest Things Prem Aware Award](#)
- [The Smallest Things Prem Aware schools guidance pack](#)
- Social media (#PremAware): [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#)