

INTENT

At Woodhall Primary School, we place great value on the development of children as individuals and providing them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to prepare them for the challenges in school and beyond. Our aim in the EYFS is to build strong social emotional and educational foundations for each child as well as moral and spiritual development. This will ultimately enable our pupils to be successful and to go on to be active citizens of society and happy, curious life-long learners. We aim for there to be no barriers to go on to further education (university) if that is their wish.

Our curriculum is therefore defined by what we know our pupils need so that they can gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they require for their success. They can only do that if we embed the right habits for learning through the *Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning* – Play and Exploration, Active Learning and Creative and Critical Thinking. This means that you are unlikely to see the same topics taught year after year as teaching will be based on children's needs and interests and each child, and therefore class, is unique.

This cannot be achieved without a foundation of trusting relationships between pupils, staff and parents. We aim to ensure that every child quickly feels secure and relaxed in our setting. Our settling in period is therefore very important.

High importance is placed in the Early Years on listening, speaking and meeting our high expectations for behaviour. We promote working together and being kind, and as such, we prioritise Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language in the Nursery curriculum. Our enabling environment and warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration.

As the pupils move into Reception, as well as a continued emphasis on the priorities developed in Nursery, we invest time and energy into helping pupils develop a love of reading, writing and number. By offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking and following children's own interests and ideas we aim to firmly embed all learning. We value imagination and creativity and seek to create a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning through a vibrant continuous indoor and outdoor provision, alongside local trips.

IMPLEMENTATION

Pupils learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The timetable is carefully structured so that children have rigorous directed teaching in maths and phonics everyday with regular sessions to focus on PSED. However long uninterrupted sessions for child-centred play are provided where the child chooses what and where they play. This allows for the children to be fully engaged which allows their brains to FORM the necessary connections for learning and allows the teachers to interact and teach the children moving on. This is also where the teachers will make the focussed observations that ensure planning for the environment is focussed on the children and their needs.

Children are provided with plenty of time to engage in 'exploration' throughout the variety of experiences carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the provision. We do this because we know that when children are deeply engaged the brain will develop to its optimum and they will make progress. The environment is planned for the inside and outside classrooms to encourage the deepest engagement so that all learning is embedded. Equal importance is given to learning in both areas and independent access to all equipment is encouraged. All aspects of the children's development including understanding the world and expressive art and design are monitored and developed, as well as a focus on promoting sustained thinking and active learning.

Planning is a team effort. We reflect on three questions:

- What do our focus individuals need to learn or are curious about?
- What embedded learning have we observed in this area?

- What can be changed to exploit the learning and interests of the children/individuals in this area?"

In this way, we ensure that the children have agency over their environment and that the provision leads to depth of learning across the curriculum.

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum. Guided by the Government's guidance on teaching phonics we aim for the majority of children to have completed phase 4 by the end of Reception. The sessions are 15 minutes long per day and there is plenty of opportunity to practise both the reading and writing in the free flow sessions. The children's writing is celebrated and on display throughout the unit.

We have a 15 minute maths session daily in Reception with an emphasis on studying key skills of number, calculation and shape so that pupils develop deep understanding and the acquisition of mathematical language. Pupils learn through using concrete manipulatives which are then rehearsed and applied to their own learning during exploration. Nursery pupils begin to develop these key skills during daily maths meetings where they explore sorting, quantities, shape, number and counting awareness. These early mathematical experiences are carefully designed to help pupils develop the content they have been taught and to support them with integrating their new knowledge across the breadth of their experiences and into larger concepts.

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together but we have a range of additional intervention and support to enhance and scaffold children who may not be reaching their potential or moving on children who are doing very well.

Staff also use quick, on the spot interventions that focus on sight words, blending and number retention with target individuals. The characteristics of effective learning are viewed as an integral part of all areas of learning and are reflected in our observations of children.

IMPACT

Our curriculum needs to meet the needs of our children, including our disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, so we spend time looking at and evaluating how children are learning. This is achieved through talking to children, looking at their work, observing their learning experiences and analysing data and discussing progress as a team. Every member of staff is involved in **observational assessment** to identify children's starting points and plan experiences which ensure progress. We focus on three children a week per class to enable us to get a clear picture of a child's development. The parents of these three children are invited to a meeting the next week so that they have a chance to feed into the assessments.

This information is tracked on the Hertfordshire Assessment Tracker which enables us to measure our starting points against a national data set. We use this information on a weekly basis to plan learning experiences and next steps so that knowledge and skills are built cumulatively. During each assessment window, three times a year, teachers update the progress children have made onto the assessment tracker which allows us to assess the impact of teaching and evaluate whether it has been enough. Evidence of children's learning including observations, work samples, photographs and contributions from parents are kept in paper 'learning journals' which children use to reflect on their progress through pupil voice.

Our curriculum and its delivery ensure that children make good progress. Children in our Early Years, on average, arrive with much lower starting points than national averages. During their time in our EYFS, children make rapid progress, particularly in the Communication and Language and Personal, Social and Emotional Development strands of the Early Years curriculum. Pupils also make good progress toward their age-related expectations before transitioning into Year One.

