



EYFS Teaching and Learning Policy

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to support a rich, interesting, and stimulating learning and teaching environment, an environment that allows children to fully develop their skills and abilities.

Throughout EYFS, we aim to

- Foster a harmonious atmosphere which supports and promotes self-esteem.
- Build confident communicators.
- Support children's development in all areas of the EYFS.
- Support every child as an individual.
- Help every child to grow up feeling confident about their own identity, in a spirit of friendship, understanding fairness and the rights of others, valuing diversity, and ready to be a British citizen.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching at Willows Academy includes a good balance of adult led and child-initiated learning. Teaching may be whole class, face-to-face with a child or small group of children during the session. Practitioners skilfully plan the learning environment to support children in making progress through child-initiated play. Sometimes, these two approaches overlap, for example when a child or small group initiate play which is then supported and extended by the practitioner. When practitioners teach children:

- They facilitate opportunities for the child to contribute and to make choices in their learning.
- They scaffold the child's development, to support increasing independence and control.
- They ask questions to check or develop children's understanding.
- They work collaboratively to solve problems and find answers.
- They provide formative feedback to help children to consolidate their learning and extend their exploration and thinking further.



Staffing and Organisation

Willows Academy Foundation Stage consists of 2 classes, FS1 (nursery) and FS2 (reception). FS1 has a maximum of 39 children on role who can attend either am or pm session. Each child is entitled to 15 or, if they are eligible, 30 hours of nursery education per week in F1. We have a maximum intake of 39 children in the EYFS unit.

In FS1 and FS2, the children have daily opportunities for structured and free flow play both indoors and outdoors. This time is supported by a teacher, early years practitioner and a teaching assistant, who act as facilitators to the child's learning. All members of the Foundation Stage Team are involved in planning, preparation, and assessment. We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so all practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in-service, and local cluster group training. The EYFS is working closely in partnership with the PVI practitioners.

Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the EYFS document. The EYFS is based on seven key features of effective practice as set out in Development Matters 2020

1. The best for every child
2. High-quality care
3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn
4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn
5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt
6. Self-regulation and executive function
7. Partnership with parents

As part of our best practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Provide early intervention for those who need additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and where needed outside agencies
- Plan challenging learning experiences for all our children, based on the individual needs of the child



- Provide opportunities for our children to engage in adult led learning and self-initiated learning
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors
- Plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning.

Areas of Learning:

The EYFS is made up of three prime areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

There are four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. At Willows Academy, children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences, in which children can explore, think creatively and are active. Our curriculum model details how we provide a well-balanced curriculum and our planning ensures that each child can develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area of the EYFS. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful activities and through a mix of adult led and child-initiated learning.

Launchpad for Literacy

Willows Academy use Launchpad for Literacy alongside the curriculum. This approach enables Willows Academy to

- identify and close skill gaps
- embed speech and language interventions
- ensure progression for all and clarifying 'Quality First Teaching'
- create a firm, broad base of skill readiness for all aspects of literacy, including Phonics.



Phonics

The use of phonics is one of the many skills needed to be able to be a reader and writer. We aim to teach high quality phonics to ensure the children have the best start possible in reading and writing. The learning of phonics is the beginning of children's body of knowledge, skills and understanding that are an essential part of learning to read. To read and understand texts children must learn to recognise/decode the words on the page. Good quality phonics teaching allows the child to be secure in the skills of word recognition and decoding which allows children to read fluently. This will result in children being able to read for pleasure and will allow them to move onto developing higher order reading for meaning skills. These phonic skills need to be taught systematically and involve a variety e.g multi-sensory resources for all learners. The teaching of phonics at Willows Academy follows the Read Write Inc programme and this flows throughout the curriculum.

In **nursery**, focus on pre-phonics skills (phase 1) daily. The class teacher will make a judgement about when the class is ready to begin the Read Write Inc. synthetic phonics programme. This is when the children are confident in hearing initial sounds and can segment and blend simple words, such as c-a-t means cat. Examples of pre-phonics skills are alliteration, rhyme and environmental sounds. These will be a focus throughout the EYFS unit to ensure they are ready for the formal SSP phonics programme.

In the **Reception**, we will begin **Read Write Inc.** which will continue into key stage 1 and beyond as required. At the start of Reception, we carry out an initial phonics baseline assessment to create a clear picture of the children's knowledge and skills. As a result, and to aid a smooth transition from nursery to reception, in the first few weeks of their time in reception children will be taught following the pre-phonics skills. With a focus on Aspects 6 and 7, the children can practise listening skills and practise the essential alliterative and segmenting and blending needed to prepare them for Read Write Inc.

Our EYFS unit provides a strong continuous provision to enable children to repeat, practise and master. Resources enable children to engage in exploratory play with sounds, investigating variations, pattern, rhyme, voice as well as a range of real sounds through active phonics.

Practitioner's awareness of the opportunities for phonics within the environment will support children's learning, questioning, and sharing experiences are essential for the development of key skills. Children always have access to a range of reading and writing materials, vocabulary rich classrooms are the basis of continuous provision.



Love of Reading

Willows Academy promotes a love of reading, this starts from the very start of a child's journey with us. Children are gifted books in the first weeks of their time in EYFS. Books are the key driver throughout our Early Years reading enhanced curriculum in EYFS and high-quality texts are carefully planned to support learning in line with the seven areas of learning. These texts are used to influence enhancement ideas to add into provision for children to reconsolidate their learning and understanding of the book during continuous provision time. However, Willows Academy ensure that there is a clear balance between reflecting a love of books and children's interests in the environment.

The Importance of the Environment

Environment activities and experiences are arranged to promote independence.

Opportunity is given by adults to play co-operatively, alone, or time is given for children to stand and observe. There must be time and space allowed to develop play both inside and outside, safely, and securely.

The environment is aesthetically appealing with lots of examples of children's current work included in child centred displays.

Displays are limited to identified notice boards to reduce visual clutter. Displays include examples of children's speech where possible and appropriate and give children opportunities to talk about, review and think about their previous experiences and learning (metacognition). Clear guidelines and boundaries promote positive behaviour.

Challenging social situations are seen as opportunities for growth and development, explaining and working with children to help them feel strong and safe, and to learn how to manage difficult issues and conflicts in appropriate ways. Willows Academy has adopted Jigsaw to deliver PSED. Jigsaw brings together PSHE Education, emotional literacy, social skills and spiritual development in a comprehensive scheme of learning. Teaching strategies are varied and are mindful of preferred learning styles and the need for differentiation. Jigsaw is designed as a whole school approach, with all year groups working on the same theme (Puzzle) at the same time. This enables each Puzzle to start with an introductory assembly, generating a whole school focus for adults and children alike. Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, (EYFS), Jigsaw is used to support the development of PSED, (Personal, Social, Emotional Development), and PD, (Physical Development), ensuring children make progress towards and beyond the Early Learning Goals for these areas of learning.

In a natural environment, where children, are given time to thoroughly explore their thoughts, feelings, and relationships, they develop understanding of the world and the environment using emotions, imagination and senses.



The foundation unit at Willows Academy is rich in print and children are able to see print in a meaningful context, children are actively encouraged to create their own print for the environment. High quality books are available in every area of the unit that are reflective of the Early Years reading enhanced curriculum however, when learning to read Willows Academy understands the importance of children reading books that are matched to the systematic, synthetic programme we follow (RWI).

Displays in the early years foundation unit at Willows Academy reflect the children's learning. Children contribute to the displays and can see the journey their learning takes. Where appropriate, displays will support children's learning in the form of learning walls and some displays will be celebrating good work.

Assessment

We begin our assessment processes through getting to know each child, using close observation in structured and incidental ways. Practitioner knowledge supports the majority of judgements of children through daily discussions and moderation. Purposeful observations and significant wow moments are recorded through our observational assessment tool, Tapestry, and are assessed to indicate the child's level of development. Recorded assessments/observations lead to action for the child, identifying next steps of development. This is a process of formative assessment. Children are involved in this process through their daily discussions, circle times and through their Learning journals. They can reflect on their learning and voice their opinions. Tracking assessment systems such as the EYFS RAG allow us to identify children at risk of making poor progress – always remembering that in the early years, progress can be uneven. Practitioners identify the 20% of children in their class at risk of making poor progress and they specifically focus planning to meet their needs. Staff also identify the more able children (assessed as being ahead of the expected levels of development in EYFS Development Matters) to ensure that we plan rich and stimulating experiences to extend their learning. Progress data is entered into our RAG on entry and at every 4 weeks. We moderate our assessments through internal processes, and through moderation cluster meetings with other schools in the Trust.

Special Educational Needs

Staff will always appropriately modify learning and teaching for children with SEN and/or disabilities. We value each child as a unique individual and are familiar with and meet all the requirements of relevant equal opportunities legislation regarding race, gender and disability. We work closely and in partnership with parents and any other involved agencies to meet the needs of our children through provision that is inclusive to all. Children with identified Special Educational needs and /or disabilities will have a graduated approach, developed with the support of parents and any involved agencies. Much of the plan will be included on the Provision Map, which enables us to engage with a range of children's needs through regular, planned provision which is additional to the core curriculum. Children at



the stage 2 of the graduated approach will benefit from additional levels of differentiation and in class support. The SENCO monitors the progress of all children with SEN to ensure that they are benefitting from an appropriate curriculum which enables them to feel safe and secure, and to learn effectively. Where children with SEN are making poor progress, further assessment is undertaken, or support sought.

Parental Partnership

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in the early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining the Foundation Stage curriculum to parents/carers during parent's evenings, 'Stay and Play' sessions and FS1 transition meeting to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home.
- Encouraging parents/carers to complete all aspects of the starter packs.
- Operating an 'open door' policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Sharing children's progress through annotated photographs and observations.
- Encouraging parents/carers to share their child's 'wow' moments.
- Encouraging parents/carers to share pictures of their children's successes at home through Tapestry.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in the Foundation Stage and to regular Foundation Stage Events.
- Inviting parents/carers to stay during registration time for early reading and fine motor skill activities.
- Encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night, to make use of the word books and to comment on reading progress in a 'read and response' booklet.
- Inviting parents to celebrate their child's successes during regular class and whole school assemblies.
- Discussing individual targets with parents/carers at Parents' evenings (informed by the EYFS overviews)
- Providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and the EYFS assessment overviews.
- Holding child/parent 'Stay and Play' sessions to enable parents/carers to play alongside their child in the Foundation Stage environment.
- EYFS newsletter information.
- Parent/Carer questionnaires.



Transition into FS1

Every child is invited to attend our transition process each week for one half term before starting in the nursery. We see this as vital in building up relationships with our families. During this time information about the setting is shared and time is allowed for parents/carers to freely ask questions about their child starting at Willows Academy. These 'Stay and Play' sessions (early intervention programme) allow the child and their parent/carer to become familiar with the setting before their starting date. It also compliments the home visit that takes place after the 'Stay and Play' sessions. During the home visits parents and carers will complete a Willows Academy starter pack and will be given a welcome booklet with all the relevant information regarding their child starting nursery. Children attend a seamless programme of sessions prior to their F1 start date which allows time for discussions with parents/carers, partnership settings and multi agencies if needed.

Transition between FS1 and FS2

At Willows Academy, we have a seamless transition into FS2 as the FS1 children have access to the same provision all year, ensuring they are calm and confident in both spaces and with all teaching staff between the two years. Provision is set up in a way that supports and challenges the developing needs of both FS1 and FS2 to ensure this can be a calm yet effective learning space for both. At Willows Academy, the Foundation Stage team meet regularly to discuss assessment and induction issues.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

The EYFS Co-ordinator and Year 1 teacher are working in partnership to make the transition into year 1 as smooth as possible.

At Willows Academy,

- Discussions regarding children's attainment levels help group the children appropriately in KS1.
- Individual EYFS observations are passed on to YR1 teachers.
- Children's overview sheets and phonics tracking sheets are passed onto YR1 teachers.
- An EYFS end of year class summary is passed on to YR 1 teachers.
- Reception children visit their YR1 class and teacher during the end of the summer term for several sessions during the transition process.



- End of year reports for each individual child are passed on to year 1 teachers. This includes information regarding characteristics of effective learning for each child.

Date adopted – 19.07.21

Review Date - July 2022 , reviewed by S.Cox

Next review date – July 2024