



Early Years

Intent, Implementation and Impact

'Play is the highest form of research.'

Albert Einstein

At Woburn Lower School, we support play-based learning, guided by the children's interests. This enhances natural curiosity where children are excited and engaged. Learning is purposeful and fun.

INTENT

At Woburn Lower School, we intend to:

- Make every child's first experience of school happy, safe, positive and fun with the welfare of the child central to our provision of care, learning and play.
- Value the individuality of the children and ensure that regardless of their needs, all learning opportunities allow access and opportunities to stretch and challenge.
- Enhance the natural curiosity every child starts their school journey with by providing a curriculum based on active learning in a stimulating environment that develops interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Foster and nurture children's self-confidence, so they recognise and fulfil their individual potential and special talents.
- Provide opportunities for children to take ownership of their learning and behaviour by making choices which will foster confident, independent and innovative learners and thinkers.

- Support children to develop care, respect and appreciation for the environment in which they live and for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions different to their own.
- Promote collaborative learning by encouraging children to develop positive relationships with their peers and other members of the school community.
- Encourage parents and carers to become active partners with the school.
- Ensure there is a smooth and effective transition between Early Years and Key Stage One

IMPLEMENTATION

At Woburn Lower School, our intent is implemented in accordance with the government's document, 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS, March 2021). This document sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years old. Reception is the final year of the EYFS.

It is based on four key principles:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- **Learning and development** is important because children develop and learn at different rates.

The seven areas of learning and development are all important and inter-connected. For each area there are Early Learning Goals that describe the level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS.

Prime Areas of Development

The Prime Areas of Development build the foundations for children's success by igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, helping them to form positive relationships and therefore, thrive.

The prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language (including Listening, Attention & Understanding and Speaking):** This area is valuable because spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development and children's early interactions form the foundations for language and cognitive development. All children are encouraged to interact with adults and their peers in a language rich environment. Conversation, story-telling and role play enable children to use a developing range of vocabulary and rehearse language structures.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (including Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships):** Children's development in this area is crucial so they can lead happy and healthy lives. Every day in school, with the development of positive relationships with adults and their peers, children are supported to develop self-assurance to persist and show resilience when undertaking challenge. They learn to understand and manage their emotions, how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably, in addition to learning how to lead healthy lives and manage their personal needs independently.
- **Physical Development (including Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills):** Children develop the gross motor skills of core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility through games and activities both inside and outside which is vital for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor skills are developed to enhance the progression of writing including tracing, colouring, painting, cutting, threading, dough, clay and many other aspects of manipulative play.

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- **Literacy** (including Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing)

Reading and writing opportunities take place in a variety of ways, some teacher led and some child initiated. The children begin by singing, reciting nursery rhymes, rhyming games and identifying sounds through listening games. Children need secure skills in listening and hearing rhyming patterns if they are to make good progress in phonics and reading. After a brief settling in period, the children will begin learning the letter sounds and tricky words through the structured accredited TWINKL daily phonics scheme. The children will bring home a decodable 'phonics' reading book that matches the sounds they know. They keep this book to read at school and at home and are encouraged to re-read it daily. The children also have a 'home' reader to develop word recognition, blending skills and subsequently fluency. They have a 'library' reading book that can be changed weekly and is at a higher level than the child can read independently. This book is to share as a family and develop a love of reading and books.

Writing, in the form of mark-making, is encouraged from the time the children start at Woburn Lower School as a way of expressing themselves and recording meaning. The development of pre-writing skills and co-ordination are supported through fun, independent and regular adult led activities whilst children can practise their developing skills during meaningful play opportunities within the learning environment. When ready, we teach the children to form letters correctly.

- **Mathematics** (including Number and Numerical Patterns)

The development of a strong foundation in number is the aim of this area of learning so, children can excel, develop positive attitudes and be confident, resilient mathematicians as they grow. They will develop a deep understanding of numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. They will learn through stories, songs, games and practical activities where they talk about maths, collaborate, explore and investigate number to look for patterns, connections and relationships. Children will develop their reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures.

- **Understanding the World** (including Past & Present, People, Culture & Communities and The Natural World)

This area includes history, geography, religion and science with the aim of guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. Opportunities such as investigations and meeting important members of society are provided to enhance the children's personal experiences. Children will listen to a broad range of stories, non-fiction, poems and songs that will help to develop their understanding of our diverse world in addition to enriching and widening their growing vocabulary.

- **Expressive Arts and Design** (including Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative & Expressive)

This area of learning and experience develops children's imagination and creativity. The children engage in and communicate through art, music, design technology, drama and dance activities where they explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. Through this, they develop their understanding, self-expression and vocabulary.

First Experiences

We strive to make sure that when children enter our school they are full of positive emotions – excitement, confidence and happiness, so they settle quickly into school, learning and developing from day one.

Individuality

At Woburn Lower School, it is our priority to ensure that in a safe environment, we encourage every aspect of a child to develop, regardless of starting point. We inspire children to continue being curious and provide opportunities for their lively, enquiring minds to grow.

Curriculum and Environment

Our Early Years' curriculum is underpinned by the Fundamental British Values of:

- Democracy - where we make decisions together.
- Rule of law – understanding that rules are important.
- Individual liberty – freedom for all.
- Mutual respect and tolerance – treat others as you would hope to be treated
- What behaviour is unacceptable – stereotyping, intolerance, segregation and isolation from others and community.

We aim to deliver an engaging, broad and balanced curriculum that provides individual and appropriate challenge as it progresses. This is through playful activities and rich learning opportunities which are relevant to all the children's cultures and communities. Children will be supported to take risks in an environment which offers stimulating resources and encourages exploration.

Learning Characteristics

We consider it is of vital importance that children learn and develop positive characteristics as individuals alongside academic knowledge and skills. These are qualities that will ensure they continue to learn and thrive throughout their school life and beyond.

We also encourage the Characteristics of Effective Learning, as outlined in the Development Matters Document (2021):

- Playing and exploring- (their engagement) – provided through a balance of adult led and child initiated planned, purposeful learning experiences.
- Active learning- (their motivation) developed through providing opportunities where the children have some independence and control over their learning and activities, making decisions and taking ownership over their learning
- Creating and thinking critically (their thinking) – encouraging children to develop their own ideas, make links and decide ways of doing things. Adults support this and offer encouragement through clarification and open-ended questions.

Parents as partners

We recognise and value the important role parents play in education as they know their child best. Consequently, we encourage parents to engage in an active partnership with the school. This results in a positive impact on the child's development and parents feel secure to share important information, seek advice, help and support should they need it. It helps the child to feel safe and secure while in the setting if they see that their parents feel comfortable there. It creates a shared level of expectation, improves the child's outcomes and ensures every child has their individual needs met. The success of this strong partnership is based on a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

Transition to Year 1

Transition between year groups is an important step for children, and we acknowledge that the step from Reception to Year 1 is a significant one due to the expectations of moving from the Early Years Curriculum to the National Curriculum. There are many elements to ensuring children at Woburn Lower School experience a smooth and effective transition however we believe every child is unique, so the transition experience will be tailored to meet the child's individual needs.

IMPACT

At Woburn Lower School, we adhere to the principles of assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This is based on ongoing observations of what the children know and can do. It enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All adults who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process which includes parent voice. Children are also encouraged to assess their own learning, primarily through discussion.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on ongoing observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, other focused assessments such as sound/number and high frequency words, annotated examples of independent work, photographs, and information from parents. We plan for observations when undertaking short term planning. Some of these observations and assessments are recorded in the child's individual learning journey.

Summative assessment

Individual assessments are recorded using the OTRACK tracking tool for the EYFS. On-entry baseline assessments are entered into the system based on transition documents from pre-school settings, initial observations and the Reception Baseline Assessment. At points during the year, the tracking tool is used to summarise children's progress through the curriculum. This allows the school to see where the children are on their own developmental pathway and if they have made progress from their individual starting point.

Statutory

Within the first six weeks in which a child starts Reception, they undertake the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a short and simple check of a child's early literacy, communication, language and maths skills. There is no pass mark or score and the assessment uses play activities, so the children do not realise they are completing an assessment.

At the end of the Reception year, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. Its aim is to provide parents, carers and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. Each child's level of development is assessed as emerging or meeting the expected levels of development, against the early learning goals.

Monitoring Impact

Class teachers, alongside the Head Teacher and the SENCO meet half termly to review the attainment and progress of children and key groups of children. These meetings also review the actions put in place to support children who are not working at expected or are not making expected progress through the curriculum.

Teachers participate in regular in-school, LC2 schools and local authority group moderation meetings. This provides an external quality assurance and validation of our teacher assessments. The EYFS Profile data is analysed by the Head Teacher, the EYFS leader and the Local Advisory Committee.