

The Federated Schools of  
Wood Street Infant School  
&  
Worplesdon Primary School



Early Years Policy

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## 1. Introduction

In Early Years we value the importance of a child's first year in school. They bring to school a wealth of learning experiences from various educational settings on which their future is built. We aim to provide a holistic experience of learning for every child and deliver a curriculum that is appropriately challenging and one that recognises age and individual needs. We also value pastoral care as our highest priority and have developed strong links with the local nurseries to ensure all children have a smooth transition into school.

## Philosophy

At the federated schools of Worplesdon and Wood Street, we give pupils opportunities to develop the skills needed to become well-rounded, articulate, independent and confident members of a constantly evolving society, valuing themselves and others and feeling inspired by the world around them. We aspire to promote a love for learning and life and we achieve this with the following four drivers at the core of our delivery of the National Curriculum (2014).

- Building resilience
- Inspiring curiosity
- Promoting teamwork and independence
- Instilling empathy.

## 2. Our Aims

The aim of our policy is to underpin life and learning with universal positive human values such as respect, unity, friendship and compassion. We aim to provide an environment in which children experience these positive universal values first hand throughout their schooling. This policy has been written to ensure that the Early Years Curriculum is carefully planned and meets the needs of the children.

Our aims are:

- To provide an environment where all children feel happy, secure and valued.
- To help children build on prior experiences through carefully planned activities.
- To ensure all children are responded to as individuals, celebrating each unique child.
- To help the children develop positive attitudes and relationships.
- To support and encourage the children when faced with new challenges and experiences.
- To ensure all children are given time and space for active exploration and child-initiated activities both indoors and outdoors.
- As adults, to ensure that we observe and listen to the children, aid their enjoyment and curiosity and develop their learning.
- To build close working partnerships between staff and parents and/or carers.

## 3. Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from 1st November 2024.

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In conjunction with this, we use Arc Pathways to inform our planning and assessment. It enables us to deliver a curriculum which meets the needs of our children, recognising that all areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

We strive to provide the four main principles to this document to create an effective Early Years setting.

- A Unique Child;
- Positive Relationships;
- Enabling Environments;
- Learning and Development.

This document expresses the importance of children developing ‘Characteristics of Effective Learning’ which we embrace and develop through our planning, environment, assessment and interactions with the children across the federation, this is built upon as children move through the school.

These fall into three headings:

- Playing and Exploring (engagement)
- Active Learning (motivation)
- Creative and Critical thinking (thinking)

As a Values Based Education (VbE) school, we incorporate ‘Learning Powers’ into daily teaching, provision and interactions with the children. These learning powers are linked to our school drivers and are underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Please see Appendix 1, where the school drivers, characteristics of effective learning and learning powers are mapped out to show coverage. The Learning Powers are:

- Resilient Tortoise
- Curious Cat
- Empathy Chameleon
- Teamwork and Independence Bee

There are seven areas of learning within the Early Years curriculum. These are split into prime areas and specific areas, with prime areas being highlighted as the most important to early development.

### 3.1 Prime areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED);
- Communication and Language (CL);
- Physical Development (PD).

### 3.2 Specific areas

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the World;
- Expressive Arts and Design.

Each week we plan for adult led activities, child led activities and independent learning opportunities to enable the children to direct their own learning, with adults skilfully interacting with them, to guide and extend them. Our Early Years environment is set up to ensure children have independent access to a wide range of resources, both in the indoor and outdoor classroom.

## 4. Assessment

At the federated schools of Worplesdon and Wood Street, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process.

Upon entry into school, class teachers complete a profile for each child using the Arc Pathway development statements across both prime and specific areas. A profile for each child is made and provides a ‘best fit’ summary of the current level of development. Teaching staff use Arc Pathway (an online assessment tool) to capture children’s progress against age related expectations. Arc Pathway is split into six monthly milestones

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and enables teachers to assess children against age related expectations. This profile highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well, next steps and then areas in which additional support is needed. The Arc profiles are shared with parents twice a year in line with the rest of the school. Parents can access this from home and regularly see their child's learning journey. Arc Pathway also has the feature for parents to add any specific achievements of their child to their online learning journal.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

Children are deemed to have made a 'Good Level of Development' if they have achieved the expected level in all aspects of PSED, CL, PD, Literacy and Mathematics.

Data analysis by the EYFS lead means predictions are made across the year to ensure all children are making progress and that children are on track to meet the expected level. Interventions are put into place for those off track. Progress is tracked across the year with a final summary, alongside the attainment levels, in July.

Staff observe pupils to identify their level of wellbeing, involvement and characteristics of effective learning thus building a holistic picture of each child. Regular observations are made through children's independent learning, through adult challenge and interaction, focus groups and using our online assessment tool (Arc Pathway) to monitor progress across the curriculum. Within our setting, careful observations and skilful interactions are pivotal in gaining an in depth understanding of each child as a learner.

### 5.1 Nursery to Reception

We appreciate that some children find transition times very difficult and therefore employ a variety of strategies to make this a calm and happy time for both children and parents. We value the partnership between school and home and therefore develop these relationships through 1:1 meetings with the children and parents in June with the headteacher and class teacher.

Parents and carers are invited to an information evening during the term before their child starts school. An information pack about Reception, including photos of their new classrooms and the Reception staff are sent to parents.

During the summer term we visit several of our main feeder nurseries to meet the children in an environment where they feel secure and to discuss their needs with the Nursery Practitioners. We attempt to make contact with other nurseries by phone. All children are invited to visit the school for an afternoon with their new classmates and extra visits are arranged for children who may find transition more difficult. Extra meetings between School staff, Nursery staff, parents and any professionals involved with children are also arranged for children with special educational needs.

### 5.2 Reception to Year One

Across the Spring and Summer term the children are encouraged to become more independent in both their work and organising their own belongings. From October half term children should be coming into class by themselves and preparing what they need for that day. There is a lot of discussion about the expectations for Year One and the children spend time with their new teacher on class swap day. The Year One and Reception teachers also have several detailed discussions about each individual child and their needs.

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As with the nurseries, children can be provided with extra visits to Year One and by the Year One teachers if needed. Year One and Reception teachers also swap classes to share stories which allows the children to become familiar with other adults. Year One's enabling environment reflects the pedagogy of EYFs and this supports children to build upon skills and knowledge they have acquired as they transition into a well-established continuous provision setting.

### Supporting Learning at Home

We know that parents / and or carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We also recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents / carers about their child before they their child starts in our school
- Visits to nurseries wherever possible, prior to their starting school
- Inviting all parents and carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts
- Class teachers meet and greet on the doors during the morning drop off and afternoon pick up
- During the first half term parents are invited to bring children into classrooms to share their new school environment
- Offering parent's and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in reception
- Sharing support packs about the curriculum and regular weekly news updates about curriculum coverage
- Sharing their child's progress and development through Arc Pathway
- Parent consultation meetings twice a year
- Sharing termly Arc Pathway profiling termly which provides parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and next steps.

We also value parents' / and or carers contribution to the children's learning journeys. We encourage parents to capture their child's 'wow moments' on the Arc Pathway tool. This promotes the partnership between school and home settings thus creating the ever important holistic picture of each individual child as a learner.

We follow the 'Essential Letters and Sounds' phonics programme and information along with videos of sound pronunciation are shared with parents. To support early reading at home, children are provided with a sound mat and sounds taught each week are shared with parents. Reading books are carefully matched to each child's phonics knowledge and are phonetically decodable.

Further support for parents can be found on the Reception google classroom page, such as video links for correct letter pronunciation for Phonics, long term planning and games for supporting school learning.

## 6. Special Educational Needs

See SEN Policy.

## 7. Health and Safety

Both our indoor and outdoor classrooms are safe and secure. The outdoor classroom is fenced and older children and adults are encouraged to use a different route. Children are reminded continually of the safety rules whilst indoors and outdoors. A separate risk assessment is in operation and resources are regularly checked to ensure safety.

All Reception staff are first aid trained, some with Paediatric first aid.

Please see the school intimate care policy for health and safety concerning toileting and changing.

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## Worplesdon Primary School – Early Years Policy

### 8. Appendix 1

School Drivers	Learning Powers	Characteristics of Effective Learners
Building Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Tortoise: Resilience</b> <i>This is the ability to recover from set-backs, to welcome challenge and give things a go. The opposite of this is someone who is <u>Dependent and Fragile</u>.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Playing and exploring – Children investigate and experience things, and have a go.</li> <li>● Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.</li> <li>● Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, makes links between ideas, and develops strategies for doing things.</li> </ul>
Inspiring curiosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Unicorn: Creativity</b> <i>This is the ability to imagine new possibilities. There is a playfulness with ideas and an imaginative approach to challenges. The opposite of this is someone who is <u>Literal and Rule-bound</u>.</i></li> <li>● <b>Cat: Critical Curiosity</b> <i>Effective learners have energy and desire to find things out. They ask questions that go a bit deeper and are not content to stay on the surface of things. The opposite of this is <u>Passive Unquestioning learning</u></i></li> <li>● <b>Spider: Meaning Making</b> <i>Effective learners are on the look out for links between what they are learning and what they might already know, they create a “web” of meaning in their minds that connects ideas together. The opposite of this is <u>Fragmented, piecemeal learning</u></i></li> <li>● <b>Owl: Strategic Awareness</b> <i>This is the ability to be aware of how much time, and what resources a learning task might need. They can plan and organize their learning. The opposite of this is <u>Robotic unreflective learning</u>.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Playing and exploring – Children investigate and experience things, and have a go.</li> <li>● Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, makes links between ideas, and develops strategies for doing things.</li> </ul>
Developing teamwork and Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Bee: Learning Relationships/Interdependence</b> <i>This is the ability to work well in a team as well as to be an independent learner. The opposite of this is someone who is <u>Isolated and Dependent</u></i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Playing and exploring – Children investigate and experience things, and have a go.</li> <li>● Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, makes links between ideas, and develops strategies for doing things</li> </ul>
Instilling Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Chameleon: Learning and Changing</b> <i>This is having a positive mindset and the basic belief in oneself as a person who can learn and change, the opposite of this is someone who is <u>Stuck and Static</u>.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Playing and exploring – Children investigate and experience things, and have a go.</li> <li>● Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.</li> <li>● Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, makes links between ideas, and develops strategies for doing things.</li> </ul>

