



Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School

“Nurturing curiosity and inspiring imaginations”

Welcome to Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School



A very warm welcome to Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School. We are delighted to offer high quality nursery places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds in a caring, family atmosphere where children thrive.

We believe passionately that every child should have the best possible opportunities to learn and develop to their full potential.

We recognise that every child, like every parent or carer, is an individual. This underpins the way we plan our curriculum and develop the children’s learning environment.

In this way, we can provide exciting and challenging learning opportunities for every level of interest - from the most active outdoor learner to those who like to work for hours on their own special project.

We offer your child an interesting and stimulating learning environment, and the opportunity to play and explore alongside highly experienced and talented staff.

We are proud to have been judged by OFSTED to be OUTSTANDING in all areas in four consecutive inspections, the most recent being March 2023.

Why should you choose Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School?

1. We are Warrington's **only** Maintained Nursery School, which means we are owned by the Local Authority. We are a school, just like primary and secondary schools, and that means we have a headteacher and fully qualified teachers. At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School **each class is led by fully qualified expert teachers** and supported by highly qualified and experienced teaching assistants. As we are a school we are a not-for-profit organisation, which means all funding goes to resources for the children
2. All of our staff are highly qualified and experienced; we deliver training for the local authority and other regional authorities because of our outstanding practice
3. Ofsted continues to judge us as **OUTSTANDING**
4. We have amazing indoor and outdoor learning environments with high quality and hi-tech resources
5. We have our own on-site **Forest School** lead by fully qualified Forest School leaders
6. We have lots of visits and visitors to enrich your child's experiences
7. We pride ourselves on the positive relationships we build with parents and carers as a part of our Sandy Lane Family

What parents and carers say about us:

"Staff do an amazing job. The time and effort they put in with every child is brilliant. My child receives a warm welcome every day, they have a lovely loving approach to all of the children"

"The teachers have a fantastic understanding of my child's needs and know my child on a personal level"

"Staff go above and beyond for children and to make parents feel at ease, they're second to none"

"The support and time staff give me as a parent has given me such confidence"

"I love how much my child loves coming to school she always comes home telling me something new she has learned"

"The nursery involves me in all aspects of my child's education, I feel we work together as a team to ensure the best outcome"

"The resources are fantastic and the teachers create spaces for children's interests"

"The things staff have done for me and my child to help us through this journey will never be forgotten. As a parent of a disabled child you need to be able to trust staff and we trust each and every one of them with our lives, they have made my child blossom"

Find more parent and carer comments in the 'Parent' section of our website:

www.sandylanenurseryschool.co.uk

Our Provision:

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School we have 3 provisions: Sunshine Room for our 2 year olds; Garden Room for our 3-4 year olds and Rainbow Room for our children aged 2-4 years with special educational needs.

- Sunshine Room:



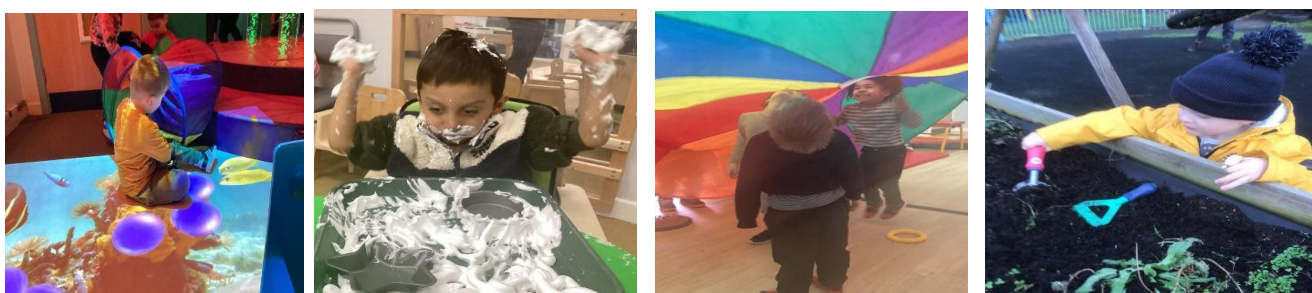
This is our provision for 2 year olds. If your child is eligible for a place we offer funded places of 15 hours per week. If we have any spare places we offer the chance for families to buy extra sessions at £18.00 per session. We ask that parents buy at least 2 sessions per week. Check if your child is eligible at www.mylifewarrington.co.uk

- Garden Room:



This is our provision for 3 and 4 year olds. Children are offered 15 hours per week which is usually taken over 5 mornings or afternoons. We also offer 30 hours per week for eligible families, taken over 5 days. If we have spaces we offer families the opportunity to buy additional sessions at a cost of £18.00 per session.

- Rainbow Room:



This is our provision for children with complex additional needs. The Local Authority allocate places within this provision subject to specific criteria of complex need. Children aged 2, 3 and 4 can usually access this provision for a maximum of 15 hours per week.

Settling into nursery/Getting to know your child:



For most children, starting nursery will be their first venture into the outside world without their family. It can also be an emotional time for parents and carers too. That's why a settling in programme is really important not just for your child but for you. We want your child to feel happy, confident and secure in the nursery school environment. Therefore we have a personalised approach which enables us to share information and to get to know you and your child. We introduce ourselves with a home visit. This is a lovely opportunity for you and your child to get to know a member of staff from the room they will be attending. Staff will take time to play with your child during the home visit and it's also an opportunity to talk with you about your child and nursery life. After this we will invite you and your child to have a short visit to nursery where you can play alongside your child, get to know their key worker, the other children and the other adults. After this we will build a unique programme working towards your child attending the full session.

Session Times:

Please see the Wrap Around Care section of our website for information after school care until 6.00pm and holiday provision

Session Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00-8.30	Breakfast club £3.00 Breakfast provided	Breakfast club £3.00 Breakfast provided	Breakfast club £3.00 Breakfast provided	Breakfast club £3.00 Breakfast provided	Breakfast club £3.00 Breakfast provided
8.30-11.30	Early Education Funding (EEF) Universal offer of 15 hours (AM session)				
11.30-12.30	Lunch club £6.00 Children bring own packed lunch	Lunch club £6.00 Children bring own packed lunch	Lunch club £6.00 Children bring own packed lunch	Lunch club £6.00 Children bring own packed lunch	Lunch club £6.00 Children bring own packed lunch
12.30-3.30	Early Education Funding (EEF) Universal offer of 15 hours (PM session)				
3.30-4.00	After school club £3.00	After school club £3.00	After school club £3.00	After school club £3.00	After school club £3.00

30 hour timetable of sessions:

Session Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00-8.30	Breakfast club £3.00 Breakfast provided	Breakfast club £3.00 Breakfast provided	Breakfast club £3.00 Breakfast provided	Breakfast club £3.00 Breakfast provided	Breakfast club £3.00 Breakfast provided
8.30-11.30	Early Education Funding (EEF) Universal offer of 15 hours (AM session)				
11.30-2.30	15 hours of further free childcare as part of the 30 hour offer Children bring own packed lunch				
2.30-3.30	Additional time £6.00	Additional time £6.00	Additional time £6.00	Additional time £6.00	Additional time £6.00
2.30-4.00	Additional time plus after school club £9.00	Additional time plus after school club £9.00	Additional time plus after school club £9.00	Additional time plus after school club £9.00	Additional time plus after school club £9.00

Attendance:

For your child to get the maximum benefit from nursery school it is important that they arrive on time and attend their allocated sessions. We know that good attendance impacts greatly on children's attainment. We aim for 90% attendance which equates to 19 days absence over the year. We know that children easily pick up minor illnesses and we can cope very easily with coughs and colds, so please bring your child in if this is the case. If your child is too poorly to attend please contact the office to let us know. We prefer you to take holidays during the 12 week holiday period to reduce your child's absences from nursery but if this is not possible we ask you to complete a holiday form.

What to wear:

Our red school sweatshirts and t-shirts, containing our school name, are available to purchase from the school office. Play is a messy business and we find that many parents and carers opt for their child to wear our uniform. Unbranded items can also be available from Asda or Tesco and we sometimes have donations of pre-loved uniform which we make available in the entrance area:



School uniform is not compulsory at nursery and items of suitable clothing are also available from Asda or Tesco: green sweatshirt, polo shirt, black/grey trousers/jogging bottoms or skirt.

When choosing how to dress your child for nursery we do advise the following;

- Dress your child in 'easy' clothes to manage. Dungarees, trousers and jeans with buttons and fasteners can be difficult for young children who are struggling to become independent. Jogging bottoms, or leggings for example, are much easier to manage.
- Dress your child in "play clothes" rather than "best" clothes – children's exploration can often mean that they get messy.
- Encourage your children to dress and undress themselves, even though it will take a little longer. Let them take off their coats, hang them up and put them on – all by themselves.
- Clearly name **all** items of clothing which your child is likely to take off at nursery.
- Provide at least two changes of clothes in case your child needs to be changed. If we need to use nursery clothes, we would appreciate them being washed and returned as soon as possible. Thank you.

Children do have access to the outdoors in all weathers, so please ensure that your child is appropriately dressed in practical clothing. This means sun cream and covering up in the sunshine, and warm coats and jumpers in the cooler weather. We do provide waterproof trousers and jackets, and we do have some wellies, however you may wish to bring along your child's own wellies. If so please mark each boot with their name.



A typical day:

1. Meet and greet at the beginning of the session:

This is the time when staff meet and greet you and your child and information can be shared between you and staff. Children can explore the provision - maybe something new or maybe back to a favourite activity.

2. Target Activities:

Once parents have said their goodbyes staff invite groups of children to take part in specific activities. This might be a game to support maths concepts or language development as well as learning to take turns; it might be activities to encourage mark-making or reading. Staff also support children to take part in activities based on their Personal Plans if they have additional needs. During this period children also get the opportunity to share one others' spaces whereby small groups of 3 and 4 year olds visit and play with our 2 year olds and our children who are based in our SEND provision. We believe that all children can learn from each other and that inclusive practice develops huge empathy and understanding.

3. Hello Time:

Garden and Sunshine Rooms: This session is planned around The Learning Challenge Curriculum. This programme requires deep thinking and encourages learners to work using a question as the starting point. We begin each half term with a 'big question', over the weeks we explore this, taking in your child's thoughts and theories which we discuss, explore and test out as a group. We like parents to get involved with the 'big question' too! During this time we also plan adult led activities which may have a literacy focus e.g. phonics or a maths focus. Throughout we place great emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills and listening, attention and speaking.

Rainbow Room: This session is a multi-sensory session where children will explore a different musical sound, a smell and a texture each day. It's an opportunity to extend vocabulary as well as developing listening and attention skills. Staff also plan for a year of Essential Experiences. These are events which we believe every child should have the opportunity to experience. These include visits to the duck pond, breakfast/lunch at the café, pumpkin picking and a train ride.

4. Learning in the provision, inside, outside and beyond:

We believe that it is very important for children to have a sustained period of time to play and explore the indoor and outdoor spaces. During this time staff support children to extend and develop their learning and interests through child and adult initiated activities. We use 'in the moment' planning to respond immediately to children's interests and next steps for learning.

Some groups, during this time, may have their session in Robin Wood, our on-site Forest School, others may be working with a visitor or they might be off on a community walk to enrich an emerging interest or as part of the Learning Challenge Curriculum or for an Essential Experience.



“Practitioners should be ambitious for all children. To do this they must consider the individual needs, interests and of development of each child in their care. They must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development” Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school based providers, September 2025

During this period children will also access a healthy snack. We ask for a half termly contribution of £8.00 if your child attends 15 hours and £16.00 if your child attends 30 hours.

5. Review, Story and Rhyme Time:

This is the time to share what we have been playing and learning. Children are invited to talk about what they have been doing during the session or to look at images of themselves at play. We share stories and sing songs and nursery rhymes. If it is library day children also have the opportunity to choose a book to take home. And finally it’s time to say goodbye!

The curriculum:

Our curriculum follows the principles of Development Matters, the non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage published by the Department for Education. More detailed information can be found in our Curriculum Handbook in the ‘Key Information’ section of our website

The earliest years of a child’s life are about helping children to become effective learners. We support children to play and explore, to be active learners and to think creatively, finding their own solutions to problems. Our ‘characteristics characters’ help children to think about and begin to recognise behaviours they have used in their learning, have they been a ‘concentrating crocodile’ or a ‘keep on trying kangaroo’. There are seven areas of learning which we use to help us support a child’s development, care and learning needs. Children mostly develop their skills through the 3 PRIME areas first, which are essential for your child’s healthy development and continuing learning. These are:

- **Communication and language:**
This area of learning is all about developing good listening and attention skills, having a good understanding of what is said and also speaking, developing vocabulary and expressing themselves clearly



- Physical development

This area of learning is all about developing large and small movements in a variety of ways, having good control and co-ordination and being able to handle tools like pencils and scissors. It also covers health and self-care and looking at ways to keep healthy and safe.



- Personal, social and emotional development

This area of learning is all about making relationships and getting along with other children and adults, having confidence and self-awareness, and being able to manage their own feelings and behaviour.



As children grow, the PRIME areas will help them to develop skills in the 4 SPECIFIC areas. These are:

Literacy

This area of learning is all about listening to and retelling stories as well as making up their own. Looking at finding out books and learning songs and rhymes. It also covers reading development, mark-making and writing and learning about letter symbols and the sounds they make – phonics.





Mathematics

This area of learning is all about numbers, counting, shape, space and measures. Children learn about the value of number e.g. the 'fourness' of four, the different ways to make four, counting to four, counting out four items, recognising the number four. Children learn about the properties of shapes e.g. a rectangle has four corners and four sides of which two are long and two are short; a cube has square faces

Understanding the world

This area of learning is all about supporting the children to make sense of the world they live in. Children are invited to talk about themselves, their families and where they live and to find out about other people and places and to investigate the natural world. Children will also find out about how to use technology for a range of purposes.



Expressive arts and design

This area of learning is all about developing different forms of expressions, exploring music, dance and song and encouraging children to be creative in all respects. It is also about imaginative/pretend play as well as exploring different art media like paint, mud and clay.

Learning environment:

We are very lucky at Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School. We have wonderful learning spaces both indoors and outdoors. Apart from the classrooms we also have indoors a playcourt, in which we express ourselves through movement and dance, and a multisensory room, an immersive environment designed to develop the senses. It includes an interactive floor and specialist sensory equipment which can either stimulate mental activity or provide a relaxing environment.



“The best classroom and the widest cupboard is roofed only by the sky”

- Margaret MacMillan, Nursery Education Pioneer, 1914

Our outdoor environment is spacious and amazing! We have water pumps, sand pits, mud kitchens, potion stations, climbing and balancing equipment, den making resources and a woodwork shed. Furthermore we have a kitchen garden and orchard of which we are immensely proud. Here we grow seasonal fruit and vegetables including pumpkins which we harvest for snack and offer to parents along with recipes to make a variety of healthy meals.



Forest school



One of the unique experiences we offer at Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School is extensive learning to the outdoors through our well established forest school, Robin Wood. Each week every child has one day playing and learning in Robin Wood. Lots of important learning takes place here. The children climb trees, walk along balance ropes, make camp fires and dens and use tools like mallets. Here the children develop their large muscle strength and skill all precursors to developing muscle strength for writing! They can also relax in hammocks looking up at the sky, swing on the tyre, make fairy villages and mud pies and build bridges across the ditch.

Children also learn about nature and how to look after our environment and the creatures who live in it.

One of the most significant aspects about forest school is the research. It clearly tells us that Forest School is good for mental health and emotional wellbeing, it improves children's self-esteem and self-belief.

“being outdoors contributes to higher levels of wellbeing– bringing physiological benefits such as stress reduction”

- *Children in the Outdoors – A Literature Review (Muñoz 2009)*

A recent study looked at the effects of long term forests school programmes on the resilience, confidence and wellbeing of children and *“established that long term Forest Schools programmes had positive impacts on children’s resilience, confidence and wellbeing”*, showing improvement in key indicators on *“self-efficacy, persistence, and problem solving skills”*, *“marked propensity to take risks, heightened levels of self-belief, positive attitude, independence and increased tendency of taking initiative”* and *“positive impacts on children’s physical and mental health in addition to improving their social and cognitive competence. The study found that promoting wellbeing in children enhances their confidence and resilience.”*

- *Impacts of Long Term Forest School Programmes on Children’s Resilience, Confidence and Wellbeing – Sarah Blackwell*

Progress:



At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School we use a combination of adult planned and reviewed activities and ‘planning in the moment’ which means we are constantly assessing children’s needs, interests and progress. We are responding immediately to move learning on either through supporting children’s skills knowledge and understanding or by providing additional challenge.

We use Tapestry, an on-line e-portfolio, to capture significant learning and special occasions. We send these observations to parents and invite you to comment, you can also add observations of your child playing and learning at home which we will then share with your child in nursery. Each term your child have a series of focused observations completed by all staff. At the end of the term a short report is then posted through Tapestry to provide information about your child’s progress and to suggest next steps that you can join in with at home to support your child’s learning. If you have any questions about your child’s learning, including how you can support them at home, we encourage you to speak with their key worker at any time and you will receive an invitation to meet with staff when we post their report. Our website also contains lots of information on activities you may like to try at home too.

If you have any concerns about your child’s development please share them with us and we can offer advice. We have highly trained teaching assistants who deliver speech and language programmes and 2 expert Early Years SENDCos who are also qualified teachers. Depending on your child’s need we may set up a Personal Plan to target specific learning or if needed, with your agreement, refer your child to another professional such as a Speech and Language Therapist or an Educational Psychologist. Please see our website for more information about how we support children with additional needs.

Home school links:

Home learning looks like this



We believe that an effective partnership between home and school is vital. Home involvement is highly valued and we welcome your help at all times. As well as the weekly Tapestry home learning activities there are plenty of opportunities for you to get involved with your child's learning. We have a lending library books in each room, Travelling Ted, Story Sacks, Music, Maths and cooking bags. We will invite you to come along to Stay and Play sessions and to accompany us on minibus visits and community walks. The more you get involved the more your child will succeed. We also ask for volunteers to help us to restock some of the home learning bags. If you do have any time to help us please let a member of staff know.

Parent and carer partnership:

We are keen to build positive and effective relationships with parents and carers right from the start of your family's journey with us here at Sandy Lane. We are proud of the strong relationships we have with parents and carers, we are a family who work together for the benefit of all our children. There are daily opportunities to speak with your child's key worker and other members of the room teams and the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher are always available at drop off or collection for an informal chat. The results of our termly parent/carer questionnaires demonstrate what a friendly school we are and just how effective our partnerships are. Have a look on the school website www.sandylanenurseryschool.co.uk under the 'Parents', 'What do our parents say?' tabs.

In addition we have recently established two parent and carer groups. Both groups are very informal and everyone is welcome.



Friends of Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School is a group open to families of children who attend nursery. This group supports the work of the school to benefit all our children by running fundraising events, volunteering and working together on aspects of the school improvement plans to make our school the best it can be



Rainbow Parent and Carers group. This group meets for a drink and a chat once a month. It's an opportunity to share ideas, meet new friends and support each other. We can also invite professionals from other services to attend the group to answer any questions parents/carers may have.

Preparing for big school/transitions:

As your child takes their next step in their learning journey they will be equipped by the experience of Nursery to help them be independent, confident to face new challenges, happy to share their ideas and be comfortable to learn alongside different children and adults.

Our children move to approximately 20 different schools with the majority going to either St Andrew's or St Stephen's. We have well established transition relationships with all of our primary and special schools. This includes the new teachers visiting your child here at Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School and your child's key worker sharing information about your child as a learner and the progress they have made. During the summer term, before they move onto 'big' school, we talk a lot about moving on, sharing books about starting school, looking at photos of their new school, the teachers and the uniform and book bag. For some children we will support visits to their new school to aid this transition further.

Next Steps:

We think our school is a pretty special place and our staff, children, parents/carers and governors all play an important part in our 'Sandy Lane family'. We hope that this document has given you an insight into the wide range of experiences we offer. If you would like to arrange a visit to see our nursery first hand you would be very welcome.

Our contact details are:

Tel: 01925 623640

Mob:07415 869045

Email: Admin@sandylanenurseryschool.co.uk

Applying for a place:

You can download a copy of our application form from our school website www.sandylanenurseryschool.co.uk. You'll find it under the 'Key Information', 'Nursery Admissions' tabs or you could pick up a copy from our school office. Whichever method you choose please just complete and hand your form into our reception at Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School. Our website also has information about 30 hours funded places, wrap around care, holiday provision and lots more.

