

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEDGEHOGS NURSERY & SUNBEAMS CLUB



EYFS Curriculum & Learning Policy

Updated: September 2026
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Introduction

At Woodlands Primary School, Hedgehogs Nursery and Sunbeams Club (the school), we provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). We are guided by the principles of the Statutory Framework for the EYFS, along with the Characteristics of Effective Learning and British Values, ensuring that each child's care and learning experience is tailored to meet their unique developmental needs.

The EYFS outlines four guiding principles that shape our practice:

- 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 learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- The importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates (see Characteristics of Effective Learning). The framework covers the education and care of all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

Our approach places the child at the centre of all we do, focusing on building strong relationships and providing responsive, child-led learning through play, exploration and interaction.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We use the Characteristics of Effective Learning and British Values alongside the EYFS, as they support a well-rounded approach to early childhood development. These characteristics help practitioners understand how children learn best, encouraging curiosity, motivation and resilience.

British Values - democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance - are embedded in our practice to promote a respectful and inclusive environment where children learn to value themselves and others. Together with the EYFS, these frameworks ensure children's personal, social and emotional development is supported alongside their learning, preparing them for life in modern Britain.

British Values Statement

We follow the principles of the EYFS, which require all early years providers to actively promote the fundamental British Values of:

1. Democracy
2. The Rule of Law
3. Individual Liberty
4. Mutual Respect and Tolerance of Those with Different Faiths and Beliefs

At Woodlands, we promote these values by:

- Encouraging children to express their needs, likes and dislikes through gestures, sounds and developing language (supporting individual liberty and democracy).
- Offering choices during play and routines to help children develop confidence and a sense of control in their environment.

- Providing consistent boundaries and routines so that children feel secure and begin to understand expected behaviour (supporting the rule of law).
- Modelling kindness, patience and respect in all interactions, helping children learn to respond positively to others.
- Introducing children to diverse resources, songs and stories that reflect different cultures, communities and families (promoting mutual respect and tolerance).

Our practitioners act as positive role models, creating an inclusive and nurturing environment where all children are valued as individuals. Through warm relationships and consistent care, we begin to build the foundations of respect, fairness and belonging that underpin British Values.

Curriculum Intent

At Woodlands, our aim is to provide a high-quality, play-based learning environment where every child is supported to thrive, grow and shine. Through a balanced mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities across the EYFS curriculum, we nurture curiosity, independence and resilience. Our carefully planned curriculum promotes early development through secure attachments, sensory exploration and routine-based learning, delivered in a flexible and responsive way. By offering rich, first-hand experiences indoors and outdoors, and focusing on communication, wellbeing and strong family partnerships, we ensure children are well prepared for key developmental milestones and confident transitions throughout their early years journey.

Curriculum Implementation

At Woodlands, we use Development Matters as a guide, alongside our professional judgement, to design an effective early years curriculum that builds on children's strengths and meets their individual needs.

The curriculum is divided into:

- Prime Areas: Communication and Language; Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development
- Specific Areas: Literacy; Mathematics; Expressive Arts and Design; Understanding the World

Hedgehogs and Squirrels

In accordance with the EYFS Framework, our focus in the Hedgehogs and Squirrels rooms is on the three prime areas of learning, which are essential for healthy development and future learning. We support language development through stories, songs, rhymes, repetition, and meaningful one-to-one and small group interactions, encouraging children to express themselves using sounds, early words and simple sentences.

Physical development is promoted through safe and stimulating spaces that support movement, balance, coordination and strength, with daily opportunities for crawling, cruising, grasping and self-feeding. As children become more mobile, we provide activities that help them build confidence in their physical abilities.

Central to our practice is the development of secure attachments through a key person system, fostering emotional wellbeing and strong relationships with children and families. We support each child in developing a sense of identity, belonging and confidence in social interactions, laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Preschool

In our preschool, we implement the EYFS through a child-centred, play-based approach that supports each child's holistic development across all seven areas of learning. Our carefully planned and engaging environment promotes curiosity, independence and a love of learning through meaningful, first-hand experiences, both indoors and outdoors.

We provide a balanced curriculum with adult-led and child-initiated activities tailored to the needs, interests and developmental stages of the children. Practitioners use high-quality interactions, observations and assessment to inform planning and ensure progress across the three prime areas, which form the foundation for learning.

We also provide rich opportunities for development in the four specific areas, embedding them in routines and purposeful play. Through stories, songs, imaginative play, problem-solving and hands-on exploration, we nurture creativity, critical thinking and early academic skills. Strong family partnerships, a focus on wellbeing and inclusive practices ensure all children are supported and able to make good progress from their starting points.

Reception

In Reception, the curriculum continues to follow a child-centred, play-based approach that supports development across all seven areas of learning. Children participate in a mix of whole-class, guided, adult-directed and child-initiated activities. Each half term, the EYFS team introduces a theme to inspire learning, while allowing flexibility for children to follow their own interests.

These themes are selected to build upon children's existing knowledge and extend their understanding of the wider world, promoting engagement, curiosity and deeper learning.

Impact

By following Development Matters, we ensure that children make strong progress across the prime and specific areas of learning. Meeting developmental milestones supports communication, physical development and emotional wellbeing, laying a solid foundation for future learning.

Our curriculum enables children to become confident, curious and independent, with secure relationships and growing resilience. Regular observation and assessment ensure that any additional support is identified and provided in a timely manner, helping all children make good progress from their starting points and transition smoothly to the next stage of their education.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

We are committed to providing inclusive care and education. All children, regardless of their background, ability or developmental stage, are given the opportunity to thrive. Early identification and support are offered to any child who may need additional help with their learning or development, ensuring every child can access the full curriculum.

Working with Parents/Carers

- Parents and carers are central to understanding how each child learns best.
- We share feedback and developmental updates through Tapestry, parent/carers meetings and informal conversations at drop-off or collection.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to share learning from home to support continuity and consistency.

- Parents/carers will receive copies of statutory assessments, including the Two-Year Progress Check and the Reception Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP).
- We host information evenings, parent workshops, stay-and-play sessions and performances to foster positive home–school relationships.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation and impact of the curriculum are regularly monitored by the leadership team to ensure it remains effective, inclusive and aligned with statutory requirements. Monitoring activities include observations of practice, learning walks, moderation of assessments, staff feedback, and analysis of children’s progress and engagement.

The curriculum is reviewed annually, or earlier if significant changes are required, to reflect the evolving needs of the children, staff development priorities, or updates to national guidance. Staff are actively involved in the review process to ensure the curriculum continues to provide high-quality learning experiences and positive outcomes for all children.