



Teaching and Learning Policy

At Westlands Nursery we know that high quality teaching, interactions and positive relationships with parents, enable our young children to become lifelong learners who can reach their full potential.

We provide a setting that supports children to develop independence, confidence, curiosity, resilience and well developed social skills. Our practitioners have a strong understanding of how children learn and understand the vital role of learning through play. Children feel safe and have a sense of belonging and form strong attachments. Children are encouraged to identify and communicate their own needs and feelings and are empowered to respect themselves, each other, their communities and their environment. They are encouraged to be courageous and take risks, challenging themselves and each other.

Children learn by being active, by constructing, exploring, experimenting and feeling. Children require space and time to repeat, practise and consolidate what has been learnt. Children build their learning on what they can already do and explore further what is familiar to them. They work on things that interest them, learning from first hand experience in real-life situations. With this in mind we ensure our planning is centred around the children's interests and the adults are trained to plan with this in mind.

Practitioners understand that each child's rate of development and learning is varied and individual. This means there is a need for a breadth of experiences rather than a narrow restrictive programme.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of your child from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years' providers must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes.

Central to the EYFS are the characteristics of Effective Learning. These are;

- Playing and exploring (**engagement**);
- Active learning (**motivation**)
- Creating and thinking critically (**thinking**)

At Westlands Nursery, these characteristics of Effective Learning underpin the teaching and learning. Adults embrace these characteristics when planning learning opportunities and use them to reflect on the way children learn.

The seven areas of learning specified in the EYFS that must be taught are;

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
2. Communication and Language. (CL)
3. Physical development (PD)
4. Literacy (L)
5. Mathematics (M)
6. Understanding the World (UTW)
7. Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

We use these 7 areas of learning to help us provide a play-based curriculum full of exciting and engaging activities that focus on the children's interests, needs and stages of development and allows them to explore and discover at their own pace. Our learning environment, both inside and out, is set up to encourage the children to use their imagination and discover their own learning style. Children's learning is developed through a mixture of adult supported and child initiated activity.

The physical enabling environment is central to strong early years teaching and learning. A range of learning experiences encourage children to explore and control the direction of their learning. Different areas are carefully structured and planned to meet different aspects of learning.

Our Baby Room is a calm and neutral space. The areas are laid out to allow for lots of open floor space and we have a separate black and white area for non-mobile babies. This room focuses mainly on the 3 prime areas of learning. We incorporate this by providing a range of sensory activities and natural resources for exploration on a daily basis. We have a small slide in the room, to encourage the development of the children's gross motor skills and to allow them to take appropriate risks. The babies have access to a range of books, musical instruments, puppets and props to support their development in communication and language. Our outside area is easily accessible and provides the children with opportunities to explore sand, water and mud as well as appropriate push along/ride on garden toys.

Our 2 year old room has also been designed to have a very natural and calming feel. In this room we have a home corner, small world, mark making and a cosy book area. Each area allows the children to have easy access to the resources and to make their own choices on the toys they wish to play with. This encourages the children to have ownership of their learning and encourages their independence, imagination and problem solving skills.

Our two preschool rooms have been designed to work as one to allow for bigger areas of learning. We have a role play area that is regularly changed to meet the interests of the children, a sensory cosy area for the children to have some quiet time when needed, a small world area with a range of small world resources to allow the children to create their own worlds, a construction area filled with loose parts to encourage the children to use their imaginations. An art/mark making area with easily accessible resources, giving the children the opportunity to have their own ideas and choose how they would like to be creative. A book corner with access to a range of factual and fictional books and tuff trays for messy play. All of these areas allow the children to have the opportunities to build on their skills and develop their learning.

Within these areas in each room, there are opportunities for exploring, investigating, contemplating, practising, being quiet and relaxed, being noisy, messy, private or sociable. The staff ensure these areas are kept clean, inviting and well-resourced to support independence. Resources are easily accessible, well maintained and organised with an emphasis on open ended exploration and collaborative learning. There is

a clear routine that is consistent, ensuring children feel secure and are able to work independently. Boundaries are clear and consistent across the setting and children are supported to manage their own feelings.

The outdoor area is a central feature of the physical learning environment. It is given equal importance to the indoor area and is carefully planned and maintained. Each room has its own area to enable them to free flow in and out of, so outside can be accessed as much as indoors.

The role of the adult

The role of the adult is essential for supporting children's development and to enable them to make good progress whilst at Westlands Nursery. Each child will have an assigned key person who tailors learning to meet individual needs and who engages with parents and carers. All adults understand the importance of modelling positive relationships to children and other adults in order to create a warm and trusting environment and ethos.

Adults observe children in order to respond to their needs and interests. These observations are used to assess children's progress. Observations and assessments are used to support the planning for individuals and groups of children. Staff plan activities that reflect children's interests and stages of development.

The adults will:

- Give clear explanations to enable children to make sense of and apply their existing knowledge
- Impart new knowledge and information where necessary
- Recognise children's efforts and achievements
- Praise children and give them constructive feedback which enables them to grow in confidence
- Pose open ended questions and problems to extend children's thinking
- Ensure the environment is of high quality by replenishing resources and keeping it inviting, safe and clean
- Ensure children have periods of uninterrupted play for children to lead their own learning
- Encourage children to communicate in a variety of ways
- Develop planning that is personalised, challenging but achievable. For children whose home language is not English, opportunities will be provided to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home.
- Ensure quality interactions scaffold and prompt thinking, build upon strengths, interests and questions
- Encourage children to engage in positive interactions with other children and adults

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