

# Woodcroft Academy



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

## **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception year. This policy outlines the provision Woodcroft Academy offers to all of its pupils aged three to five years. The Foundation Stage has its own framework and is therefore treated as a separate key stage. Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all areas of learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the EYFS at Woodcroft Academy. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all practitioners working in the EYFS setting. At Woodcroft Academy, we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start to their school life and effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by all practitioners.

All Woodcroft Academy we want all children to be engaged in the learning process and for their learning to be relevant and purposeful. Children develop rapidly during the early years; physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially and that play, both indoors and outdoors is an ideal vehicle for young children's learning and development.

Play based activities help children to explore, investigate, communicate and make sense of the world around them. Children are naturally inquisitive and curious, therefore we aim to provide a stimulating and focussed environment. All children in the Foundation Stage should feel included, secure and valued and no child should be disadvantaged.

## **Aim**

At Woodcroft Academy we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe, stimulating and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

We aim to build on what the children already know and develop a positive attitude and enjoyment of learning. We provide a range of opportunities to learn through direct experience, enquiry and active exploration and aim to encourage independence and confidence.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings. Woodcroft Academy are committed to underpinning our provision with these four themes; a unique child, enabling environments, positive relationships equals learning and development.

## **Foundation Stage Curriculum**

We plan and implement an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the early learning goals.

The content of the EYFS curriculum is taught in a logical progression to give children the necessary foundations for the rest of their schooling. All of the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the prime areas: Communicator and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Communication and language is developed through singing songs, nursery rhymes and playing games. All staff will encourage the children's love of reading through reading aloud and the telling of stories and rhymes.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experience in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development. Practitioners working with the youngest children in our school nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas.

The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through their Early Years at Woodcroft Academy and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole class and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using 'Bug Club', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy including shared reading and writing. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are adult led. During children's play, early year's practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and learn using the inside environment and the outdoor environment.

The EYFS curriculum is taught in a logical progression, systematically and in a way that is explained effectively, so that it gives children the necessary foundations for the rest of their schooling.

## **Characteristics of effective learning – playing and exploring, active learning and creative and thinking critically**

The characteristics of effective learning describes factors which play a central in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. The characteristics of effective learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. At Woodcroft Academy children demonstrate their attitudes and behaviours through these key characteristics. Development is not an automatic process however, it depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.

## **Observations and Assessment**

Children entering our EYFS are observed during their first weeks. This provides baseline information. As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. Monitoring of each child will take place through observations, discussion, photographs, record keeping and planned formative assessments. All evidence collected during child initiated play and will be collated in each child's personal 'Learning Journey', which are shared with parents. Parents are more than welcome to contribute to this by providing evidence from what their child has independently achieved at home. Children's progress is monitored and updated at the end of each term. At the end of the year individual scores against the ELG are submitted to the Local Education Authority.

During the Autumn and Spring terms, parents are invited to attend a parents evening with a school report issued at the end of the summer term. This report summarises the achievements in relation to the characteristics of learning alongside end of year early learning goal scores. Profile data is discussed with Year 1 teachers so that they can continue to help children achieve their full potential and transition is supported.

In Early Years, observations are fundamental. They are used to inform planning and are crucial for making 'next steps' targets. Children give indications of their learning continually through what they say, what they do, how they approach activities, how they problem solve etc. Observations are recorded in a variety of ways, these include photographs, videos and annotations on independent work. All child-led observations are added to our online platform, Tapestry and any adult-led activities are recorded on Showbie.

Continual informal and formal assessments undertaken by staff provide opportunities to identify any additional educational needs a child may have. Children identified with additional educational needs are monitored, which are discussed with parents and the SENCO. Additional advice may be sought from other agencies, e.g. speech and language therapy service.

## **Organisation of classes**

All staff within EYFS strive to develop excellent relationships with all children by interacting positively and taking time to listen. Our environment enables close attachments between

children and practitioners. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable learners.

In Nursery we offer 26 full time places and our Reception class has a capacity to offer 30 full time places. Whilst Nursery and Reception have their own classroom, children are able to free flow between each classroom with a shared enclosed playground, entrance for parents to drop off and collect, along with toilet facilities.

Throughout EYFS children have free access to fruit and milk throughout the day.

### **Admissions**

For Reception, please see the Academy Admissions Policy (school website)

We currently offer 3 intakes into our Nursery, September, January and April, enabling children to attend the term following their third birthday. We manage our own waiting list for our Nursery class based on a first come, first served basis, irrespective of catchment area, where parents can choose from 15 hours or 30 hours of early years funding per week during term time. Parents and carers wishing to add their child's name to our waiting list should contact the school office, woodcroftoffice@sbmat.org or ring 01538 714796.

### **Safety**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. (Please see SBMAT (Woodcroft Academy) First Aid Policy – school website).

### **Safeguarding – our School ethos**

At Woodcroft Academy our pupil's welfare is our paramount concern and we will always act in the best interests of the child. We recognise the importance of providing a school environment where pupils feel safe and respected. We encourage pupils to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to. We recognise that all adults within the school have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and as such they will always exercise 'professional curiosity.' We will work closely with parents and carers to ensure their understanding of the school's responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of their children, which may include the need to make referrals to other agencies in some situations. We work closely with other professionals to ensure our children have the best support in their learning and development. These can include, School Nurse, Health Visitors and Social Services. (See Woodcroft Academy Safeguarding Policy – school website)

### **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals at Woodcroft Academy, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of

children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

### **Parents as Partners and the Wider Context**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We have an open door approach where all parents are encouraged to communicate with our staff if they have any concerns about their child and their development. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education. Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

### **Moderation**

Our SLT carry out moderation and evaluation termly through observations and discussion. This is part of the whole school moderation schedule. Moderation also takes place by the Local Authority.

### **Metacognition**

Metacognition is an important part of our school ethos when children acknowledge about when and how to use particular strategies for learning or for problem-solving. This is embedded in our daily teaching to encourage all children in the EYFS to become independent thinkers.

### **Behaviour**

In the EYFS children are encouraged to be motivated and are eager to join in. Through play the children are encouraged to share and co-operate well, demonstrating high levels of self-control and respect for others. Children are encouraged to keep on trying particularly if they encounter difficulties.

At Woodcroft Academy positive behaviour is expected and encouraged. We operate a reward system and praise good behaviour and attitudes. Age appropriate strategies are used to develop a safe and secure environment for learning (EYFS follow the Woodcroft Academy Behaviour Policy – school website)

### **Health and Safety**

All reasonable measures are taken to ensure the safety of all children in the foundation stage. Documentation is signed and approved by parents before staff administer any medicines. No hazardous substances are used within the setting. (See SBMAT (Woodcroft Academy) Health and Safety Policy – school website).

### **Equal Opportunities**

In line with the school's equal opportunity policy, all areas of provision will be made accessible to all children regardless of age, sex, gender, culture, race, religion, ethnicity, family background, additional educational need, disability or ability. At Woodcroft Academy, no child will be disadvantaged or discriminated against.

### **Transition**

Transition is carefully planned for and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

Children attend introductory 'Stay and Play' sessions to our Nursery and Reception class to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. All children beginning our Nursery class will receive a home visit to gather further information.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of learning for each child in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

<b>Date: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022</b>	<b>Review Date: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023</b>
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