

# Learning in Willow Dene's Early Years Foundation Stage

During children's time in the Foundation Stage our core aim is to prepare children for a life of learning. Adults in the Foundation stage provide opportunities for children to become ready to learn. They do this by providing opportunities to excite, engage and form relationships with children, identify potential barriers children may be facing and identify and begin to teach strategies to support holistic learning that will be continued as they transition from the foundation stage into their next setting.

Teachers use a variety of pedagogies, frameworks and systems that enable teachers to achieve our aims. We use **The EYFS frameworks** guiding principles as our starting point. We value and believe in the unique child, characteristics for learning and the core values provided through positive relationships and enabling environments (Please read the Willow dene EYFS Framework). **The EYFS Fundamentals** use the 'Characteristics of Effective learning' and 'Seeds of Effective Learning' identified in the EYFS framework to record our children's broad and rich experience and how they demonstrate their understanding of learning, experiences and opportunities throughout their time in the EYFS. **The EYFS Foundations for Learning** documents the areas in which we provide specific targeted input to identify strengths and potential barriers, put in place strategies that allow children to develop independence and prepare the groundwork for future learning by trialling and problem-solving systems and strategies supported by our relationships and understanding of children and their families.

Children In Willow Dene's EYFS provision have a baseline assessment six weeks after joining us and their learning is captured throughout their time in the Foundation stage. We use the Learning Journeys framework to assess learning as do all Willow Dene Children and Young People. When transitioning from the EYFS into the Primary phase all children assessments are completed, and transition targets are produced detailing priorities from the foundations of learning that children need to work towards to learn successfully both at home and in school.

## **Willow Dene's EYFS Curriculum**

The curriculum is the sum of all its parts. It uses the Foundations for Learning to plan the direction, the Fundamentals record the broad and balanced learning on offer in the EYFS curriculum. The EYFS framework reflects the ethos and aspirations of Willow Dene School.

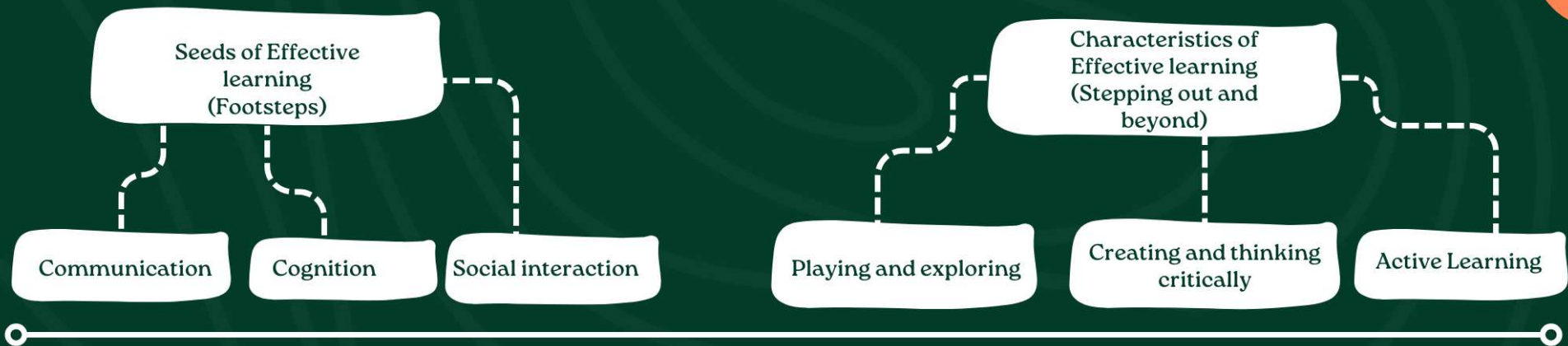
At Willow Dene we ensure children have a broad and balanced offer because we use the prime and specific areas within our planning. The Willow Dene EYFS framework has been purposefully adapted to meet the needs of children with a wide range of special educational needs including children with complex medical needs and children with Autism.

Real-world events are used throughout the curriculum to ensure children can learn from experiences happening around them, connecting them to their learning environment, the people they know and providing a safe space to explore and learn in. The unique child is central to teaching and learning and children have specific targets which they work on throughout the day linked to the Learning journey's assessment framework that provides detailed sequenced learning goals. They work with adults on a 1-1 basis and have opportunities to explore their likes and interests and to shape their experiences of learning in different contexts with different people. Children have opportunities to be part of larger groups during shared events and sharing time. Core events and opportunities are planned for using the prime and specific areas to ensure all children have balanced experiences and access to learning regardless of their starting points provided through our daily sessions, group activities planned individual learning centred around identified topics.

Families and relationships are nurtured by having an open-door policy that establishes trust, strong bonds and partnerships that are instrumental to children and families' future successes.

# EYFS Fundamentals

(Developing learning, experiences and opportunities)



## Foundations for learning

(What we put in place)



## The EYFS Fundamentals

We use the Characteristics of Effective Learning as the foundation of practice in Willow Dene's EYFS. Children both of EYFS age and those children at KS1 age who are placed in an EYFS class, are developing broad skills across the 'Seeds of Effective Learning' - *Communication, Cognition and Social interaction* and the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' *Playing and Exploring, Creating and Thinking Critically and Active Learning*. Our planning and assessment incorporate these areas, and high-quality observations are captured to show holistic progress. Progress is linked to observations using our Learning Journey Assessment framework. In the EYFS we recognise that children both learn the specific knowledge and skills found in our Early Development Learning Journeys framework alongside needing opportunities to practice, embed and learn through the broader areas identified in the Characteristics of Effective Learning. By the end of children's time in the EYFS, we aim for children to be effective learners, as well as to be building skills to be independent, engaged and resilient.

Children leave the EYFS Department knowing that Willow Dene is a safe, enjoyable and vibrant place where they are happy, engaged, and understand that learning is fun. We Assess this using the Seeds and Characteristics of Effective learning as the bedrock of their experiences building in and recording both incidental and planned opportunities that support the holistic as well as the specific learning of individual children.

### Seeds of Effective Learning

| Communication | Cognition | Social Interaction |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|

### Characteristics of Effective Learning

| Playing and Exploring                                                                                  | Creating and thinking critically                                                            | Active learning                                                               | Additional                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Motor and physical<br>Social and Imaginative<br>Sensory<br>Having a go<br>Interests<br>New Experiences | Knowing something is happening<br>Problem Solving<br>Having own ideas<br>Making connections | Engagement and focus<br>Trying for themselves<br>Perseverance<br>Independence | Routines and Transitions<br>Relationships<br>Regulation and access<br>Communication<br>Learning skills |

# **Foundations for Learning**

The Foundations for Learning document identifies areas of focus that children in the EYFS need to develop strategies and skills in order to make progress. The areas are broad and holistic and take into account individual barriers and starting points. Aims and outcomes are determined by the unique child and are used to ensure children leave the EYFS having identified pathways and strategies that allow teachers and the child to continue making progress. The key areas within the Foundations for Learning are:

**Routines and transitions**

**Regulation and access**

**Relationships**

**Communication**

**Learning skills**

These areas have been identified because development within these areas underpins the success of learning now and in the future. If a child has unsupported deficit within one of these areas, this will be the primary barrier to their learning as they grow. In EYFS our focus is to identify the most effective strategies and learning tools through problem-solving and trialling a range of known established pedagogies and approaches that have been identified to support the learner profile to address their barriers. We provide opportunities to generalise taught strategies and skills in the foundation for Learning areas throughout the curriculum building on their successes.

# EYFS Foundations for learning



## Routines and transitions

Children will leave the EYFS having an identified cueing system to support transitions and having had opportunities to develop independence within daily routines



## Regulation and access

Children will leave the EYFS having identified strategies, sensory supports and appropriate equipment that enable them to be supported to regulate and access learning opportunities throughout the curriculum



## Learning skills

Children will leave the EYFS having been exposed to a wide range of self-guided and adult-led play based learning experiences that help them learn to attend, focus, and actively participate.



## Communication

Children will leave the EYFS having a clearly defined communication pathway that gives opportunities for building and extending their understanding and use of language over time through appropriate systems and strategies



## Relationships

Children will leave the EYFS knowing that relationships can be positive and have developed strategies for building friendships social skills and trust in adults and children.

In the EYFS, adults identify strategies and pathways to support children in developing the foundational skills needed to succeed and become lifelong learners. This is guided by the four themes of EYFS practice (A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, and Learning and Development).



## Routines and transitions

Children will leave the EYFS having an identified cueing system to support transitions and having had opportunities to develop independence within daily routines

### What it looks like

- OOR
- sound
- symbol
- touch
- picture

### Purpose

- Children understand what is happening and where they are going.
- There is a clear start and end so that children can predict what is happening and make a transition successfully

### Where it is practiced

- Daily routines
- functional routines
- places around the school
- places in class
- circle time

### What we are looking for

- Responses
- Recognition
- Engagement
- Change in behaviour
- Anticipation

### How

- Use cues consistently to signal key transitions throughout the day
- Model- scaffold giving time to process







## Regulation and access

Children will leave the EYFS having identified strategies, sensory supports and appropriate equipment that enable them to be supported to regulate and access learning opportunities throughout the curriculum

### What it looks like

- Sensory equipment
- sensory diets
- movement breaks
- understanding about emotions and support to recognise their needs.
- Appropriate equipment that supports children to access their environment and learning



### Purpose

- Children are well regulated and are able to use strategies and equipment to support them to attend and learn

### Where it is practiced

- This is personalised for each individual and requires a mixture of carefully planned opportunities to use appropriate equipment and resources as well as responsive interventions when children are in crisis

### What we are looking for

- Children to engage in learning when they are well regulated
- They can accept mutual support and begin to know strategies and equipment that may help them regulate and access their environment

### How

- Work alongside relevant professionals to identify appropriate equipment and support.
- Strategies and equipment are implemented consistently and reviewed regularly





## Relationships

Children will leave the EYFS knowing that relationships can be positive and have developed strategies to build friendships social skills and trust in adults and children.

### What it looks like

- Games
- Intensive interactions
- Turn taking
- Small and large group activities,
- Working with families and celebrating each other



### Purpose

- To build trust and enjoyment in being with another person and develop a range of social skills.
- Understand that adults and peers can provide meaningful and purposeful positive interactions

### Where it is practiced

- When children transition in and out of the EYFS and through all learning activities and experiences in 1:1 and group settings.
- Relationships underpin the whole EYFS Curriculum

### What we are looking for

- Eye contact
- smiling laughing and sharing a joke
- Filling in gaps, initiating, requesting more
- drawing others into play, sharing, playing alongside

### How

- Staff provide opportunities throughout the day, they model play and scaffold responses.
- They demonstrate interest and engagement, awe and wonder
- parents are involved and celebrated



## Communication

Children will leave the EYFS having a clearly defined communication pathway that gives opportunities to build and extend their understanding and use of language over time through appropriate systems and strategies

### What it looks like

- Looking
- Attending
- Responding and initiating through gesture facial expression, eye contact, voice or symbolic means



### Purpose

- To give children a means by which their wants, needs and choices are recognised

### Where it is practiced

- All opportunities during structured and unstructured times of the day.
- Through direct and indirect teaching and modelling.
- In small, large and 1-1 situations across the school day

### What we are looking for

- Spontaneity,
- Consistency of response
- Recognition of rewards
- Awareness of communication partners and understanding of the means in which their message is heard

### How

- Through a total communication approach supported by SaLT and class teams.
- Strategies are shared between home and school



## Learning skills

Children will leave the EYFS having been exposed to a wide range of self-guided and adult-led learning experiences that help them learn to attend, focus, and actively participate.

## What it looks like

- Sitting
- Attending
- Following the adult led agenda
- Actively participating
- Having a go,
- Being independent



## Purpose

- To provide children with structures and strategies to access an appropriate curriculum.
- To develop skills that support a life of learning

## Where it is practiced

- Across all planned aspects of the curriculum and school day

## What we are looking for

- Children to be able to build on prior learning, apply this to a range of contexts and people
- To be able to be flexible, problem solve, take risks and try new things

## How

Through direct teaching practices like

- TEACCH
- Attention Autism
- MOVE
- using indicators of learning from Willow Dene's Learning Journeys



# Evidence of Foundation for learning



## **Conclusion**

The Aim of Willow Dene's EYFS is to provide a safe place that children and families can thrive in. Children will leave the EYFS having developed positive relationships and be ready for fun, exciting and engaging learning. When children transition out of the EYFS their strengths and interests go with them and their foundations for learning are identified, giving them every opportunity to be lifelong learners.