

Woodlands Nursery Curriculum Overview

"Our children are our curriculum."

Children today are born into a world buzzing with technology—often holding an iPad before they can say “Mama”. As educators and carers, we ask: *What does this mean for their developing minds?* Digital childhood has changed the way children think, learn, and engage with the world. Their attention jumps like a kangaroo on a trampoline—and we believe in embracing this, not fighting it.

At **Woodlands Nursery**, we know that when children **move**, their brains **groove**—creating **multi-sensory learning highways** that last a lifetime.

We believe **the children are our curriculum**. Each day is different. Every child is unique. But our **core intent remains the same**:

To support every child to become **resilient, independent, curious, communicative, and capable of building meaningful relationships**.

Our Approach to Learning

We follow a **skills-based Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum**, supported by the **EYFS** and **OPAL Milestones**.

Our approach includes:

- Child-led planning
- Play-based learning
- Real-life experiences
- Reduced paperwork so staff can focus on relationships and play

We focus on **what matters most**: being present, intentional, and responsive to every child's journey.

Woodland Animals – Our Curriculum Aims

We symbolise our curriculum goals through our **Woodland Animals**, each representing a key attribute we want our children to leave with:

-  **Curious Fox** – We play and explore new experiences and show interest in the world around us
-  **Friendly Squirrel** – We make meaningful relationships with the adults and children. We can understand and regulate our emotions.
-  **Communicative Owl** – We are confident talkers with a wide vocabulary and have a love of books.
-  **Independent Badger** – We can do things by ourselves and look after our bodies.
-  **Resilient Hedgehog** – We are problem solvers and keep trying!

These animals help us tell the story of each child's journey in a playful, memorable way.

Assessment

We prioritise **formative assessment**—ongoing, real-time understanding of children's development. Our staff team meets regularly to discuss every child, particularly during **Spotlight Weeks**, which help us:

- Review progress
- Set new goals
- Share insights with families
- Revisit and adapt after 3 months

We intentionally **limit written observations** to ensure our focus remains on *being with the children*, not constantly writing about them.

Curriculum Areas

The EYFS is organised into **seven areas of learning and development**:

Prime Areas

1. Communication and Language

We foster rich conversations through:

- Daily stories, songs, rhymes, and discussions
- Adult modelling of new vocabulary and language
- Props, role play, and open-ended resources
- Reading for pleasure and information
- WELCOMM screening for all children

"The number and quality of conversations children have every day are crucial to their language development."

2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We help children feel **safe, seen, and strong** by:

- Building secure attachments through a key person system
 - Supporting emotional regulation, independence, and confidence
 - Promoting kindness, friendships, and cooperation
 - Encouraging children to make choices and express their feelings
 - Learning about healthy eating, hygiene, and keeping safe
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3. Physical Development

We provide daily opportunities for:

- Large and small movement play (indoors and outdoors)
- Activities that build core strength, balance, and fine motor control
- Dough Disco, obstacle courses, dance, and climbing
- Developing independence in self-care (dressing, eating, toileting)

“Children need to move to learn. Movement builds the brain.”

Specific Areas

4. Literacy

We nurture a love of reading and writing by:

- Daily story time and book talk
- Mark making and writing throughout the setting
- Book of the week, story sacks, rhyme sessions
- Letter and sound games
- Trips to the local library

Children learn that **writing has purpose**, and every mark matters.

5. Mathematics

We bring maths to life through:

- Number and shape of the week
- Cooking, counting, measuring, sorting, comparing
- Songs, games, puzzles and dice play
- Real-life maths during mealtimes, routines, and role play

“Maths is everywhere—when it’s fun, it’s memorable.”

6. Understanding the World

We encourage exploration of the world through:

- Nature walks, bug hunts, planting and growing
- Visits to care homes, shops, and fire stations
- Celebrating different cultures and traditions
- Talking about family life and personal experiences
- Investigation sheds, non-fiction books, and child-led topics
- Children to learn to use technology safely and purposefully

“Children develop a sense of awe, responsibility, and curiosity about the world.”

7. Expressive Arts and Design

We promote creativity by:

- Offering a variety of materials and media
- Encouraging imagination through role play, music, movement and dance
- Providing daily access to painting, sculpting, building, dressing up and imaginative resources
- Creating space for children to express themselves freely

“Creativity builds confidence, resilience, and problem-solving skills.”

Celebrating Special Moments

Throughout the year, we recognise and celebrate:

- A wide range of cultural festivals
- Shared meals and food tasting
- Dressing up days
- Visitors from the community
- Local outings

These experiences enrich children's understanding of themselves and the world.

Our Commitment to You and Your Child

At Woodlands Nursery, we:

- Follow each child's individual interests
 - Build meaningful relationships with every child and family
 - Monitor development without over-burdening paperwork
 - Provide a rich, nurturing, and exciting learning environment
 - Value **play, joy, and connection** as essential parts of early education
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