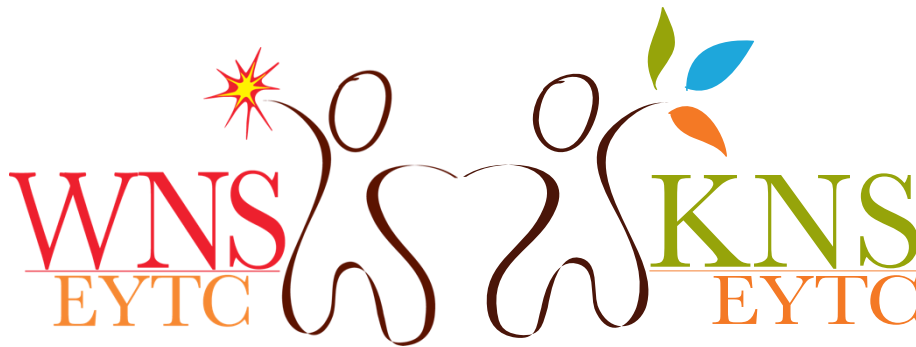


Kenilworth & Whitnash Nursery School



Teaching and Learning Policy

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Teaching and Learning Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

"We celebrate and value the uniqueness of every child"

Kenilworth and Whitnash Nursery Schools “open children’s eyes to learning” offering high quality early childhood education.

Early education matters. Research, including the UK EPPE Project, demonstrates that high-quality early years education has a lifelong, positive impact on children. We know that it is in the early years that ‘gaps’ can be closed and barriers recognised and addressed.

We are guided by the following principles:

- Informed by research
- Highly effective teachers and educators
- Parents as co-responsible partners with whom we build a working alliance (the first teachers)
- Committed to communication, through creativity and expression.
- A carefully planned and resourced environmental offer (the third teacher)
- Community connections and outreach of wider services and support.

Characteristics of High-Quality Early Education

- Learning is play-based and takes place both indoors and outdoors.
- A balance between adult-initiated experiences (guided learning) and child-initiated experiences. Within which children must be given time and space to lead play and become engrossed in the ‘flow’
- Adults take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, seeing each child as a competent and capable learner.
- Parent involvement is essential: parent support and a high-quality home learning environment significantly impact children's development.
- Teachers and Leaders of Learning track each child’s learning and development, intervening when necessary to ensure progress.
- Research projects support targeted, focused work to ensure at least good progression for all children
- Early intervention is provided swiftly to support children requiring additional or specialist help.
- We are a trauma-sensitive school that supports the needs of all children.

We believe high-quality learning and teaching is the entitlement of all children. This must equip them with the skills, knowledge, and understanding necessary to make informed choices and develop self-regulation skills.

We acknowledge that children learn at different rates and stages of development. We believe children learn best when they are happy, secure, and actively engaged in their learning.

Effective teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) cater to children's individual needs and interests, supporting learning across all seven areas of development. Our approach is inspired by Reggio Emilia and Froebelian principles that are based upon the uniqueness of each child and the socio-co-construction of learning:

- **Reggio Emilia** - Core principle: **Authenticity**. The child knows, "I belong." An educational philosophy based on the image of a child with strong potentialities for development and a subject with rights, who learns through the hundred languages belonging to all human beings, and grows in relations with others
 - **Froebel** - Core principle: **Integrity**: Unity and Connectedness, autonomy, play as central to learning. Adults providing guided freedom in responsive relationship based learning experiences and spaces that offer creativity and expression.
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OUR CURRICULUM & HOW WE TEACH

Our unique curriculum celebrates the great potential of young children, with the goal of nurturing self-motivated, lifelong learners.

At the core of our approach is the conviction that **children are innately talented and motivated investigators**, capable of sophisticated inquiry with thoughtful, responsive guidance.

Our goal is to **cultivate learning behaviours that develop into skills that form the foundation of a successful and happy life**: cooperative and individual curiosity, motivation, flexible cognitive thinking, independence, creativity, resilience, problem-solving, emotional intelligence and literacy, empathy, cultural competence, early literacy and mathematics, and an open mindset for life-long learning.

Our emergent curriculum is **play-based, but far more than "play."** It consists of expertly guided investigations that grow from children's interests, immersing them in discovery and learning. It takes place in a carefully planned environment that provides time and space for exploration and creativity. Adults who are responsive and nurture interests are 'beside the child'.

Research consistently supports emergent curriculum in early education, demonstrating that experiences based on **authentic** interests, rather than rigid frameworks, result in greater knowledge acquisition, **improved self-esteem**, and **higher achievement**. We find this approach enables children to exceed typical educational standards while fostering a lifelong love of learning.

"Children must be taught how to think, not what to think." – Margaret Mead

"The way we talk to our children, becomes their inner voice" Peggy O'Mara

Our curriculum is structured around a series of **inquiries or projects** that evolve from children's authentic interests and our curriculum goals. These projects combine children's curiosity with expert guidance, leading to meaningful discovery.

Projects vary in length, from hours to months. Children have time to explore, ask **questions, create theories, and extend their knowledge**. Adults observe children and assess learning behaviours, they may then model learning behaviours to 'up skill' a child. Working in groups on projects fosters **collaborative problem-solving skills, as children share ideas and knowledge**.

Each group has a key teacher and all work is overseen and supported by our AHT. Careful planning ensures there is time for meaningful one-on-one engagement, particularly with children identified as at risk of not achieving GLD. Our staff members hold high quality qualifications, such as NNEB, degrees, and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), and are all committed to ongoing professional development.

Our teaching approach is grounded in respect for the child and research-driven best practices. We strive to create optimal learning conditions, from well-resourced learning spaces to daily nature interactions and hands-on experiences.

We ensure that children learn through rich, engaging experiences, each group is a 'colour group' but children can also work in 'rainbow' groups so they are 'mixed' differently according to interests and developmental appropriateness.

Our curriculum is built on four cornerstones:

- **Relationship: combining well-being and Communication alongside a Love of Language**
- **Creativity (across all aspects including Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics and in its broadest sense)**
- **Experiential learning via authentic experiences.**
- **Valuing and tuning into children's lived experiences, new information attaching to known**

Our curriculum has clear end goals so we all understand what we want children to achieve, broken down into progressive steps (Milestones), alongside learning behaviours as they develop. We monitor carefully, ensuring gaps are identified and support is provided as needed. The curriculum covers all aspects of the EYFS and more information about these goals can be found in our **Curriculum Policy**.

ENVIRONMENT/CLASSROOM

Activities and experiences are arranged to promote independence. Children are given time and space to play cooperatively, alone, with or observing others. The environment is aesthetically appealing, incorporating displays of children's work and speech to encourage metacognition. Displays are limited to designated noticeboards to reduce visual clutter and include children's speech, photographs of the learning process that illustrate milestone development (staff CPD) and artwork, celebrating creativity and mark making, while encouraging discussions about past experiences and learning. Displays also include elements from 'home;' building a bridge between learning environments.

Clear guidelines and boundaries promote positive behaviour. Everyone understands that 'behaviour communicates meaning' and staff work beside parents to 'think together' about appropriate boundaries to hold and ways to support positive behaviours, focusing on 'what we want more of.'

We often discuss big people making big decisions and small people, making smaller decision and places where small people can make big decision (eg. in play) Challenging social situations are seen as learning opportunities, with children guided to manage conflicts constructively. Staff are trained and supported to de-escalate and then constructively work through protective behaviours. More information can be found in our **Relationship Policy**.

Learning is supported by appropriate resources, including ICT, which is regularly monitored for safety. Water is available at all times, and children are encouraged to serve and clear away their own food at lunchtimes. As a trauma-sensitive school, we recognise the role of food in emotional regulation, following Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and at key settling in points we may plan additional group snack times or offer warm toast on a cold day.

LEARNING OUTDOORS AND OFF-SITE

We are committed to providing high-quality outdoor and Forest School/mud kitchen experiences throughout the year. Educational visits complement the curriculum by enabling children to engage in hands-on experiences beyond the classroom and our partnership with Compton Verney ensures children can access high quality learning environments that also celebrate the central role of play and creativity. These experiences support social development through shared activities, enhance language development through discussions, and enrich children's enjoyment of learning.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING

We acknowledge that children learn in many different ways and are at different stages in their development. Teachers and Educators believe that effective and purposeful learning occurs when children have secure relationships with a key person, clear routines, access to healthy snacks and drinks, and a designated key group meeting place. Learning is most effective in a child-centred environment that is stimulating, play-based, and tailored to individual needs.

A consistent and positive behaviour system helps children understand clear boundaries to keep everyone safe and allow children to 'relax' into play and reveal their inner worlds. Teachers and Educators support children in identifying new learning and encourage their next steps in development. Strong co-responsible partnerships with parents play a fundamental role in enhancing children's education both at home and in school.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIES

Effective Teaching & Learning Strategies

Teachers and Educators are committed to providing high-quality teaching and learning activities, through planned 'time together' at the start and end of the session, and in planned group times which contain the following elements:

- The activity is well planned to match the children's learning needs.
 - Resources are appropriate and used effectively.
 - Adaptive teaching based on learning behaviour skill development is developed responsively.
 - The learning intention matches the activity and supports the school's curriculum goals.
 - The activity includes an introduction to explain the learning intention to the children.
 - The learning intention is reinforced throughout the activity.
 - Children are given clear instructions and opportunities to be active learners.
 - Behaviour is well managed, and the activity maintains a good pace—**"Children should be working harder than their teachers!"**
 - Children are motivated and engaged, with **"Most of the children active for most of the time."**
 - The adult responds to individual needs during the activity, with the awareness that teacher talk should expand the child's experiences; **"If you're talking all the time, how can you hear the impact of your teaching?"** – John Hattie.
 - Open-ended questions and sustained shared thinking prompts are used to challenge children's thinking.
 - An appropriate balance of direction and closed questions is maintained.
 - Adults demonstrate positive body language and good intonation.
 - Activities are engaging, hands-on, fun, and play-based whenever possible.
 - The activity starts with a revisit to prior learning(**remembering and memory retrieval**), concludes with a review/plenary(**reflecting and recalling**). Activities will often use (SHREC) as a basic structure.
 - Observations are recorded within planning books and via the Learning Journal App online.
 - Teachers and Educators expect all children to take part in developmentally appropriate group activities from beginning to end. An exception to this may be a child who is on the SEN register or has an IEP, although this should be based on the individual needs of the child.
 - Teachers and Educators address altercations at the earliest opportunity and support children in resolving conflicts using restorative practice and trauma-sensitive techniques.
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EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR GENERAL INTERACTION

Teachers and Educators support children's learning during child-initiated play by engaging them in meaningful interactions and fostering their language and communication skills. Staff maintain an overview of the class with a calm, quiet, yet playful approach.

Positive behaviour management strategies are consistently applied in alignment with the school's Relationships policy and Speaking and Listening guidance. Teachers listen actively and attentively to children and build upon their interests through sustained shared thinking and sensitive questioning. They observe children's play to assess abilities, learning behaviours, development against milestones, and interests while ensuring learning remains fun, engaging, and child-led. Adults model key language, expectations, and thought processes, narrating inner worlds, while providing enhanced resources and provocations to stimulate curiosity and deeper learning.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT & ROUTINE

We follow the principle that the environment is crucial in supporting children's learning in the EYFS and can be the third teacher (Malaguzzi). Teaching and learning are at their strongest when

delivered through child-initiated play. **Teachers and Educators are committed to providing an environment that includes the following elements:**

- **Stimulating areas of continuous provision** that incorporate opportunities for reading, mark-making and writing, mathematics, sand play, water play, small world, construction, technology, investigation, creative play, a quiet area or cosy corner, role play, malleable materials, a creative offer, children's kitchen, workshop/technology (woodwork), sensory play, puzzles/jigsaws, and music.
- **Ensuring resources for each area are replenished** at the end of each day and before the start of each session.
- **Setting up the environment and activities** before session begin.
- **Planning enhancements with clear learning experiences displayed**, e.g. Curiosity cube comments and images.
- **Responding to children's interests and scaffolding their learning through play.**
- **Providing continuous access to outdoor and indoor play.**

The routine of the day is based on children's needs and the recognition of the importance of learning through play and directed teaching. At the beginning of a session, **teachers ensure children meet with their key worker and 'check in' at 'welcome group' following the routine of 'group time.'**

Towards the end of the session, **teachers and educators gather children for singing and transition them back to teacher-focused learning during 'time together group'**

TIME TOGETHER: GROUP TIME

Each **key educator** is responsible for a group of children who **meet at the beginning and end of each session**. This **time together group** allows the key teacher to **build strong relationships with their key children and provide targeted activities based on individual needs**.

Activities will be:

- **Well planned**, with a clear learning intention.
- **Adaptively taught**, based on learning behaviour, not simply what children will learn but how
- **Resourced appropriately, with materials prepared and adapted** to cater for the individual needs of the group.
- **Engaging, challenging, and designed to encourage active learning and critical thinking.**
- **Observed and assessed continuously**, feeding into the assessment cycle.
- **Designed to cater to all learning styles.** Eg. active story telling

To ensure continuity and impact on learning, our group time follows this structure:

Group Time 1 – Beginning of Session

Welcome Together Time:

- **Support children in separating from their caregiver with a recognised contained space to go to. and a pattern to begin the session with.**
- **Facilitate a maths/communication-focused activity, ensuring a planned resource is available and**

that 'most of the children are active, most of the time'.

- **Demonstrate progression through the week**, linking to key concepts from the curriculum.
- **Welcome children to the group and oversee self-registration and adult 'greeted' registration process.** (Register completed by the teacher.)

Focused together time:

Lead the gathering rhyme– rhythmic, slow, and quiet

Lead an up-regulating activity.

Subject specific together time. Planned by AHT. May be based upon music/movement or sensory system activities from scheme.

Guide children through a down-regulating activity.

Transition Time together – End of Session

- **Lead Song/rhyme/story Time.**
- **Provide opportunities for mark-making, phonological awareness, writing, and 'Storytelling'.**
- **Plan and deliver focused phonological awareness activities**, linked to children's next steps in. Select activities according to developmental stage and learning needs.
- **Include music, movement, and mindfulness activities as needed.**
- **Review the day's learning.** Targeted children **share their experiences**, and **Teachers and Educators support them in identifying new and consolidated learning, as well as suggesting next steps.** This follows a **Can, Do, Review** approach to learning.

TARGETED INTERVENTION

Teachers and Educators are committed to ensuring all children make good progress. Children are monitored against milestones from (Observing Play & Learning), and those at risk of not making expected progress receive targeted intervention plans. These intervention strategies are carefully planned and regularly reviewed to support individual learning needs. Activities are adapted to meet the needs of all children ensuring they progress effectively and reach developmentally appropriate milestones.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an ongoing reflective, collaborative process that involves observing children as they participate in everyday activities. It takes into account all aspects of development and learning. Parents are actively engaged in building an accurate picture of their child's progress. Assessments focus on learning behaviour skills, knowledge, understanding, and behaviour demonstrated consistently and independently.

Assessment should not require excessive paperwork or prolonged breaks from interaction with children. Instead, it is seamlessly integrated into daily practice.

A **Two-Year Progress Check** is conducted during a child's first term in nurture nursery. Parental input is sought and included in the assessment. Any significant developmental delays are identified and shared with parents. Summative assessments are completed before children transition to primary school to ensure continuity in learning.

ROLE OF GOVERNORS

Our Governors **determine, support, monitor, and review** the school's policies on teaching and learning. They ensure that:

- **Resources are allocated effectively.**
- **Buildings and premises effectively support successful teaching and learning.**
- **The quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored.**
- **Effective teaching and learning strategies are evaluated** in terms of raising pupil attainment and progress.
- **Teachers' development and performance management policies promote good and outstanding teaching.**
- **They assess the effectiveness of teaching and learning** through the **Headteacher's report** and the **Self-Evaluation Form**.

ROLE OF PARENTS

We believe that **parents play a fundamental role** in helping their children learn and are their first educators. **Teachers and educators work hard to build strong relationships with parents.** Through **home visits, settling in stay and play sessions, Parent and child together days (PACT) each term, parent milestone sharing, Parent workshops and the key person role, staff work co-responsibly with parents to support children's learning.**

MONITORING TEACHING AND LEARNING

The **Headteacher, supported by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**, informally monitors teaching and learning on an ongoing **basis**. The school follows a **peer mentoring model** for observations and appraisals.

The **Headteacher and SLT also conduct incidental observations** during drop-in sessions and learning walks to **support overall judgements of teaching and learning.**

Senior leaders monitor learning behaviours(how) and curriculum areas(what) to ensure progress and attainment for all children and that is shared via Learning Journals with Parents

When a **Teacher or Educator is judged as inadequate or satisfactory**, the **Headteacher will develop an individual support plan**, identifying **areas where the practitioner needs support to improve.**
